BY THE AUTHOR OF "SINGLETON FONTENOY."

ONE SHILLING

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SAND AND SHELLS

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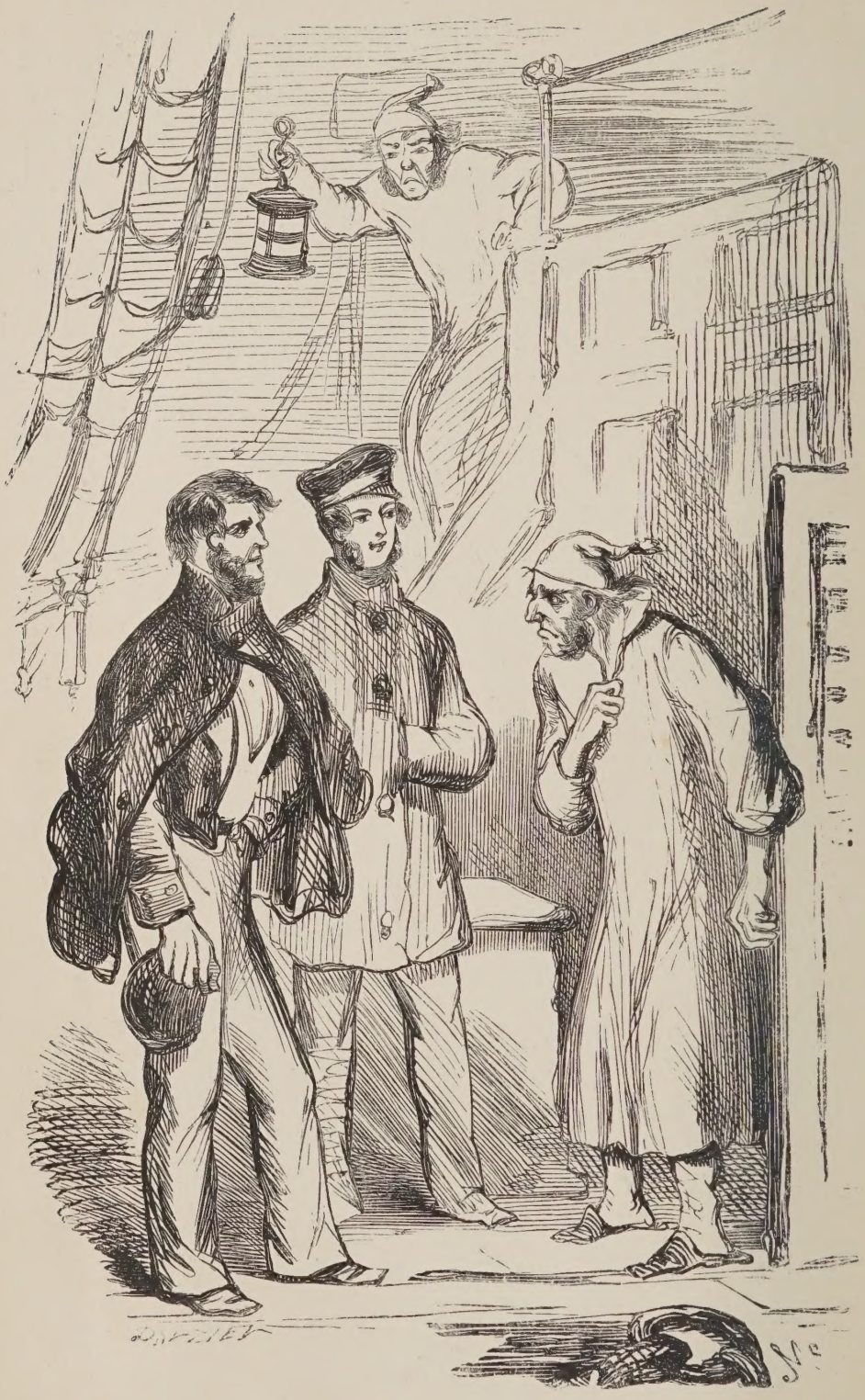

ARTFUL OLD RICKS.—p. 5. *Front.*

MARIE POLONAI.—p. 69.

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SAND AND SHELLS.

Nautical Sketches.

BY

JAMES HANNAY,

LATE OF HER MAJESTY'S NAVY,

AUTHOR OF "SINGLETON FONTENOY," ETC. ETC.

With Illustrations.

LONDON:

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PREFACE.

THESE papers, reprinted from the *United Service Magazine* and *Household Words* (thanks to the kind permission of the conductors of those periodicals), are intended to give the reader glimpses of modern Sea Life, seen through the coloured glass of Fiction—a glass not distorting the forms of things, though tinging them with the hues of imagination. I draw from experience.

But why call the book *Sand and Shells?* The title is not so merely fantastic, as at first sight it may appear. "Sand and Shells" are the "soundings" of the "fairway" of the Channel. What is the fairway of our life's voyage, but a path like this—hard and sandy at bottom, with such graceful shelly sprinkling, and help from the beautiful, as fortune may give it? To a little collection of "soundings," then, taken in this voyage, the title may not improperly be given.

One word in conclusion. A great satirist of antiquity tells us, that he "laughs and hates." But one may laugh and love. I have written here, and elsewhere, to little purpose of my old profession, if I have not made it clear, among the effusions of a satiric vein, that I have the profoundest faith in those high qualities of our Navy, which make it, at this moment, the central point of our hopes, amidst the agitations and dangers of Europe.

JAMES HANNAY.

July 8th, 1854.

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SAND AND SHELLS.

FORBESSY'S MSS.

A PRELIMINARY WORD.

It may not perhaps be impertinent—using that word in its original sense, and not in the sense in which one applies it to Captain Kraggles's language—to explain how any materials for the history of the late Scrymgeour Forbessy, R.N., fell in the way of the present writer. Briefly then, he was on a visit to a certain seaport town, and while revelling in the aristocratic and highly-polished society of the place, he made the acquaintance of young Fitz Goldner, of the brig *Undertaker*, 16, just returned from "the Coast." Fitz G., whose condescension is remarkable, admitted him to his intimacy; and to those revels which went on in the *Undertaker*, previous to her paying off—revels in which the Customs House officer (who has since passed Fitz G.'s "traps" on shore with more than common urbanity) did not disdain to participate.

In the course of conversation, and while Fitz G. was talking of the fourteen officers, who had died during the brig's commission, the name of Forbessy occurred as that of one of them; a fellow of some brains, as you gathered from Fitz G.'s stories, and who had experienced strange vicissitudes of fortune. Now, all that was left of poor Forbessy was a seal with a crest on it (a sheaf of arrows, bound round with a fillet of laurel), and a bundle of MSS. Had he no relations? This inquiry did not escape our sagacity, but though there *were* relations extant, they had long since, it would appear, dropped his acquaintance. Accordingly, though they have since put up a monument to him, and drawn his prize money, they took no interest in his literary reliques, which accordingly fell into the hands of the present writer, who has piously used them for the benefit of the public. For the matter only, Mr. Forbessy's memory is responsible in most cases; the style and tone being those of the public's most humble and obedient servant.

THE FAMILY SHIP.

CHAPTER I.

THE pleasant white island of Malta, which lies and boils in the water like an egg, every summer, had been peculiarly hot in the summer of 184—. There had been an extraordinary drought; the men-of-war had been obliged to go to Syracuse for water, and at all the churches there were prayers for rain. Father Porposa had attributed this state of things to the machinations of the Protestants: but it seems difficult to believe that such geniuses as those he blamed could have had any such influence. At all events, everybody was confoundedly tried, and among others, the gentlemen of the *Regina* were very sad indeed. Higg said that this was not the kind of thing he had bargained for, and entertained an idea of "cutting the service," an awful threat, which he always uttered on occasions of annoyance. Indeed, Higg was a very ill-used person. His father (need we mention the Count Higg, a friend of Royalty?) had been ruined by the very first gentleman in Europe, and had got some half a dozen mediocre appointments for his children, to save them from starving, after all the family fortune was gone. Having achieved this object, and having hitherto lived like a gentlman, one thing remained—the next best—to die like a gentleman; which thing, indeed, Count Higg accomplished, breathing his last in lodgings in Bury Street, in a red night-cap, which had been worked for him by "the gentle Marchesa." One feels that all this kind of thing is a little too noble for ordinary scribbling about, but it is all *à propos* to the little incident in the career of Scrymgeour Forbessy, with which our first sketch opens. Higg was the lieutenant of the watch of which Forbessy was midshipman; and, when it rained heavily at sea, or blew shamefully, or when Captain Ricks was violent or troublesome, it was to the said Scrymgeour Forbessy that Higg opened his sorrowful heart. On such occasions of annoyance, we say, Higg solemnly cursed the parental profligacy and stupidity, which had compelled the son of Count Higg—the grandson of Higg, a general in the Russian service—the inheritor of a diamond which had belonged to Peter the Great—to be blown about the planet on a lieutenant's pay, and to be buillied by Captain Ricks, the son of nobody, and the inheritor of nothing. It is curious to reflect, likewise, that another Higg in the Marines, and a Higg in the Indian Service, did likewise curse the parental ditto, ditto; and thus from the grave of the count there perpetually exhaled a damp and deadly vapour, poisoning and perplexing the brains of his children. Higg was very sore this summer, and, in the night-watch, had much grief to pour into the ears of Forbessy.

FORBESSY was descended from the ancient family of Forbessy of Forbessy Tower. This old property, which its proprietors dealt with as with a pot of porter—each man handing it to the next, considerably

diminished—got very seedy about the time of Charles II. The then Forbessy completed the business. For, as if nothing devolved on him but to live and be merry, he married Adelinda Scrymgeour—Scotch, pretty, well-born, and poor—and had fifteen Forbessys, all with blood as blue as heaven, and nothing to inherit but the family arms. Some went abroad, and were never heard of any more. One (the well-known translator of Suetonius) died in a brawl in London. The property itself was sold in due time to the great Gubbinses, who now represent the county on the very highest Tory interest, who made most of their money as contractors during the Seven Years' War, by supplying huge and hideous quantities of horse [they invented the new mode of preserving meat, by the bye,] to the brave warriors of the period. They have built a very fine castle, and the old tower moulders away in a corner of their grounds.

Our Forbessy's grandfather, who sold the estate, left one son, who, being poor, married a lady with some fortune, and left only Scrymgeour. Scrymgeour, who had no relations by the father's side within hail (for his distant cousins were all naturalised in the colonies by this time), devolved, on his father's death, on the tender mercies of his mother's relations. These worthy people, who looked on Forbessy, *senior*, as an interloper, who had married into their family "for the sake of the money," gave Master Scrymgeour a kind of education, a naval appointment, and a moderate allowance. So here he was, mid. of the *Regina* six foot high, every inch a gentleman, and talking to the mournful Higg in the middle watch.

"Well," said Higg, "may the tombstone of that old gentleman——"

"Really, Mr. Higg, don't you think——" began Forbessy.

"I know what you're going to say, youngster; but, by Jove—I've no patience with the old man. Quarter-master, bring the pipkin! If he had made the tin himself, you see Forbessy, it would have been another matter. But he got it to hand down, sir. The general's blood, sir, earned that money!"

The quartermaster came with the pipkin of cool water, and a bottle of rum in it. Higg "swizzled."

"Yes, youngster.—No; I always will say it. If I had had that fortune now! Would I have been walking about here? Would——"

"But the old gentleman spent it like a gentleman," said Forbessy, bringing out the one odd consolatory fact.

"Why, deuce thank him, with his chances, for being a swell! Do people call *me* Count Higg, and admire my manner?"

This was, unhappily, unanswerable. Nobody did call Higg a count, or did admire his manner.

"No," he resumed; "may fragments of tile and broken flower-pots lie on his resting place!" And with this odd malediction he commenced walking about the deck with rapid strides. Perhaps it will seem odd to the old Mediterranean cruiser, if any such honour these pages by perusal, that a lieutenant should have been keeping watch in harbour; but Ricks had been bilious lately, and had been attending to discipline. What is more wonderful, Ricks had been actually living on board the vessel, and was now asleep in his cabin. This

state of things naturally astonished and disgusted everybody. To resume—

"Forbessy!" called out Higg, who was afraid his midshipman might be dozing: and what right has a midshipman to doze if the officer of his watch wants to chat?

"Yes, sir." And Forbessy patiently trotted over.

"Oh! all right, my boy; I didn't see you. Why, here's another cursed disadvantage flowing out of the governor's conduct (may his monument be turned into holystones!)—a fellow can't marry!"

Forbessy yawned, and laughed at Higg's way of turning up new disadvantages at the most extraordinary times. Presently there was a gurgle heard, as from the narrow mouth of the pipkin, a pleasant congratulatory chuckle, which the pipkin was wont to give. About the same time, four bells struck, announcing two in the morning; and within a minute or two you heard ship after ship answering to the announcement along the hushed and darkened harbour; the ponderous and sonorous cry of the big line-of-battle-ship bell, and the sharp, musical, alert cry of the trim brig. It is a most eloquent announcement of time, that of a ship's bell, and beats a clock, to my mind, for effect. Then machinery, you observe, makes the clock strike, whereas the bell indicates the watchful human life that is awake through the night-silence. The clock gives the fact, but there is a human poetry in the sound of the bell.

Higg did not think all this, but only that it was two o'clock; and he, with a certain elaborateness, arranged his fat person in the starboard hammock-netting. "Youngster!" he said, with a snuffling noise, "pull the hammock-cloth over me. Night dew! Thank you. Well?"

Forbessy turned away, and commenced walking about the deck. The quarter-master was motionless on the poop; everything was perfectly still. No time can be better than the very heart of the middle-watch for solitary meditation; your loves, your duns, your enemies and your ambitions, all begin to hold witch-revels, and dance round the boiling cauldron of your imagination!

Scrymgeour was giving the powers of the time their own privilege. Indeed, we may remark, that the night-watch is the only time you get to yourself for the indulgence of your romance, if you are at all romantic. Everybody now-a-days is so "knowing," that "chaff" is on the look-out for romance all day long, and nobody can be persuaded that it has not the intellectual superiority. It is true that the Danish king's ghost has to fly when the cock crows: but which is the noblest, the ghost or the cock?

Scrymgeour was indulging in a sort of hasty overhaul of his past life (just as old Collingwood used to bring up his old clothes on a sunny afternoon and give them an airing—the fine, quiet, homely old fellow!) He had reminiscences, growing ever dimmer, of the Moravian school in Switzerland, where his boyhood had passed; and of being recalled to England, and sent across like a parcel to that country; and of a very pig-headed old kinsman, who told him that his father was dead, and that he was to be sent into a gallant profession; and

how he went right off to the Pacific, in the *Lobos*, and how three years made a man of him, and he got himself a ship next time, and was now drawing near the great time of "Passing!" What other things he had to think about may hereafter be indicated. But, by Jove! there was something stirring below just at that moment—in the captain's cabin, too.

He had been walking the poop, but he slided like a lizard down the ladder, and tugged at Lieut. Higg's leg. The lieutenant sprang upright in the netting at once; and a white figure, crowned with a white cap, came crawling out from the cabin under the poop. Oh, Ricks! you artful old gentleman!

"Officer of the watch!"

"Sir," answered Higg, as lively as a lark, and safe on deck.

"Oh, hem! Mr. Higg, eh?"

"Yes, sir," said Higg, drily; "Mr. Higg."

"Midshipman of the watch!"

"Sir," answers that officer.

"Mr. Forbessy?"

"Yes, sir; Scrymgeour Forbessy."

"Ah, hem—ah, Mr. Higg, eh?"

It is impossible to fancy anything more ridiculous than Captain Ricks at that moment; and the quartermaster, too, had come running with a lantern—a ghastly old figure in a long white nightgown, with a lot of greyish-brown hair bursting wildly out of his nightcap.

"Anything stirring?" he asked.

"Nothing, sir."

The gallant officer turned to go in again, when Higg could not help an audible chuckle. Ricks wheeled round.

"Very well, sir! I see you, sir!—Laughing at your superior officer! Very well, sir!"

How those bloodshot old eyes glared under the nightcap, as he shook his bony fist before turning to go in once more.

This trifling incident started our friend Forbessy on a new series of adventures; for next morning, Captain Ricks, who had fully relied on finding Higg asleep, and so having him "under his thumb,"—to use a favourite expression (and a most vicious squeeze that thumb had in it!)—was somewhat puzzled what to do. Higg's chuckle he could scarcely make much of. On the other hand, here was a story evidently calculated to fly over the island. The only way was to get rid of the main witnesses. So, Higg he contrived to get exchanged to the *Dragon* steamer, and Forbessy to get "lent" to the corvette, *Bloater*—a craft known (and not without reason) as a jackass frigate. Orders to accomplish these changes were soon forthcoming—there being a very good understanding (not in the sense of intellect, by the bye), between Captain Ricks and the admiral.

"A whip on the main-yard" conveyed Mr. Forbessy's worldly goods into the first cutter one fine afternoon; and the cutter conveyed him and them at a brisk pace to the mouth of Dockyard Creek, where the *Bloater* was lying. He was struck by her appearance. She was very

seedy, for one thing, and clumsy in build. The midshipman who conveyed him, and who had always served in "swell" vessels, looked at her, as Brummell would have looked at a Radical member. "A rum craft, eh, Forbessy? Gad! she's a tub!"

On board they went. "Come to join, sir," said Forbessy to the officer of the watch. As he glanced round, he caught the quick eye of a very sunburnt youngster looking at him hard and curiously.

"Come to join, eh?" said the spectacled lieutenant who received him, in a solemn heavy voice. "Our responsibilities increase, I observe."

Forbessy stared at the solemn gentleman, and pierced through his spectacles almost.

"Perhaps you'll introduce me to somebody, sir," he said, "I don't know a soul in the ship."

"A soul in the ship! There is levity here!" was the solemn gentleman's remark. "But we shall do in time, doubtless."

The chest, which bore Mr. Forbessy's name, came swinging on board at this instant. The *Regina's* midshipman shook hands with him with a pitying smile, and took himself off. And there stood Forbessy, considering what was coming next.

"Well, young gentleman," said the solemn lieutenant, "our captain —it scarcely becomes *me*, perhaps, to call him *our excellent* captain— shall be duly informed of your arrival. Meanwhile, it will be as well that you should personally know those with whom, as I trust, you will live on terms of amity and mutual improvement." The speaker took off and wiped his spectacles, and called out, with a somewhat stern manner, "Mr. Adair!"

The quick-eyed youngster came running over, with his sunburnt and gay countenance, looking subdued and decorous. "Sir."

"Mr.—Forbessy, I think?—yes, Mr. Forbessy joins us, to supply the place of our late shipmate, Mr. Trimmer, I apprehend. Not to follow in the footsteps of Trimmer, I hope, by the bye; but of this anon. Mr. Forbessy—Mr. Adair!" So saying, the first-lieutenant, Hackles, walked aft.

Forbessy was not much given to profane exclamations; but there are periods of surprise when a naval man may be pardoned, perhaps, for soliloquising in such fashion as "Well, I'm d—d!" I say, he might have been excused, had he done so; but he suppressed the inclination.

"Mr. Adair, eh?" he said, in a cheerful, off-hand way, "I'm too old a stager to be ceremonious. I come here to join. What is the plain English of that odd lieutenant?"

"You know nothing of the *Bloater*, eh?" said young Adair, inquiringly. "Just step in the waist here, and we'll take a private turn together. You're not related, then, to anybody on board?"

"Related, by Jove!" said Forbessy laughing. "I am a 'kinless loon,' as the Scotch say, altogether. Are you related to anybody?"

"That's the point!" said Adair, briskly. "Not to a soul; and I'll tell you what, we'll have to strike up a cousinship," he added, laughing. "Why, my dear sir, the first-lieutenant's the captain's cousin,

and the assistant-surgeon's the first lieutenant's brother-in-law; and the second-lieutenant's aunt married the captain's uncle; and two of the youngsters are the captain's nephews! Then—let me see—the purser comes in somehow. Ah!—the purser's mother's maiden-name was Hackles. Yes, that's it! he's somehow related to the first-lieutenant."

"Bless my life!" exlaimed the new-comer.

"Yes; she's a family ship," said Mr. Adair, using a very well-known naval phrase.

At this moment the "side" was piped; and the two young men, looking at the gangway, saw come on board the head of the family—as he might properly be called—the commander of the *Bloater*, the gallant Captain Pappleton, a little, somewhat stout man, with a very broad-tailed coat, and an uneasy jerking manner. He and the solemn first-lieutenant exchanged the formal salutes, and then began talking in a friendly way.

"Hackles, is your washing come off?" he inquired audibly.

"Yes."

"And how about the keg of lime-juice, eh?—Oh, coxswain, bring the biscuits in the tin-case aft, and let Mug follow with the warming-pan."

Two huge black-whiskered fellows, accordingly, paced across the deck. The man with the warming-pan actually blushed at having such an office to perform. There was a knot of sailors gazing aft at the proceeding in high wonder and delight.

"We'll sail directly, Hackles," the captain pursued. "It's all comfortable in your place, I suppose? Let us have no omission this time. Fresh bread I will not find for your mess, if omitted again! The ties of kindred are the ties of kindred, Mr. Hackles; but the service is also the service!"

"We have a new young officer committed to our care," said Mr. Hackles, pointing out Forbessy in the distance.

"In the place of Trimmer, I suppose? I have written to Trimmer's father," pursued the captain, severely, "this morning. I hope I have not exceeded my duties. But when a youth points the *finger of ridicule* at his superiors, he is in a bad way!"

Captain Pappleton paused; and then made a slight movement about the deck, which you could not better describe than by calling it "fidgeting." Then he turned round again to Hackles—"Oh, Hackles—the elder-wine came on board, I suppose?"

"It did so," said Mr. Hackles.

Our friend Forbessy caught these words, for he was still in the larboard waist with young Adair, and the captain had ranged within earshot of them.

"Elder-wine?" said Forbessy to the youngster, "does your old gentleman patronise that?"

"Patronise it! why, we—that is the youngsters (I don't see that I'm a youngster though, properly—I've been two years on the coast, and I killed a fellow that showed fight, in boarding the *Blackbird* slaver!)—we're obliged to take elder, instead of rum!"

"This is becoming terrible," said Forbessy, with a grin.

"Why, what's a fellow to do?" He makes out that it's good for your health, and your morals; and these two young Pappletons, his nephews, are in the mess, and one falls into the same discipline as they do."

At that moment the order was given to "pass the messenger," and the watch began running about the deck. Forbessy and Adair went below to the midshipmen's berth. Forbessy had to stoop, as we may suppose, pretty considerably in passing in. A most seedy little hole it was, the buffet all rickety, and unfit for holding the glasses. The two little Pappletons were employed on an arithmetical problem; the assistant-surgeon was asleep on the lockers; and the captain's clerk, Mr. Mules (I don't know what relation he was to anybody, by the bye, but he had been at school with half the vessel), was *ironing a collar* on the mess-table.

"Here's the crib!" said Adair, with a tranquil bitterness. "Mr. Forbessy, the younkers — look up, younkers," he said, "and make your bow!" The two little Pappletons did look up, for they held Adair in dread; pale, meagre boys, one dark, the other light, which caused them (and, indeed, it was convenient) to be distinguished as White Pappleton and Black Pappleton.

"Mr. Forbessy, Mr. Mules! Mangling done here, you observe, Forbessy!" Mules blushed with anger. It was too bad (but the coast does make fellows rough!) to "chaff" poor Mules. Mules was a kind of harmless buck in his little way. He even went on shore in plain clothes, sometimes. He haunted the minor circles of Malta, moving politely about the Dockyard Creek, brought cigars from Gibraltar to the rigging-master, and made afternoon calls on the registrar of Tubs' family. His dress was elaborate; yet, somehow, the result had the appearance, not only of effort, but, if one may be permitted the expression, of Cockney Brummellism. Not that we would be severe on Mules. With his legs and shoulders, with that nose, and the odd mouth, not to mention those grass-green eyes (and his nose, by the way, turned up at them in a hostile manner, like the beak of a bird about to seize upon a gooseberry), with these peculiarities, one is bound to say he made the most of himself. On a fine afternoon, in harbour, the ship's boys loitered about to see Mules go over the side; and he stepped into the shore-boat with a grace which the present writer feels he will never attain. And then, he made the visits we have mentioned, which he called keeping up his "position in society!" That phrase was Mules's favourite one.

Forbessy made a polite bow to the swell. "Mr. Adair is more satiric than the *bon gout* quite justifies," said Mules. Here, he pressed the iron over the collar; and Adair looked at Forbessy with delight.

"Don't you find, to be sure I'm no judge (for indeed I employ a washerwoman)," said Forbessy, unconsciously, for he had a great healthy unconsciousness about him, uttering a sarcasm, "don't you find the use of an iron unpleasant in the mess?"

Mules coloured.

"Why, I hardly—ahem!"

MR. MULL'S LAUNDRY.—p. 8.

"Because I should have thought," pursued Scrymgeour, "that it made a smell of burning, and that it was apt to knock up against your neighbours."

"Just my notion!" cried Adair, with delight, again.

"Well, well," said Mules, "the collar is finished! I was not aware," he pursued, trying a kind of bitterness, which he had heard distinguished Lady Ostrich's manner (her ladyship was "separated," and, indeed, snubbed people at Malta as if she was married to them!) "that I annoyed the mess, though, indeed, Captain Pappleton is open to complaints."

"Oh; no thought of that, my good fellow," said Scrymgeour, sprawling himself along one side of the lockers, comfortably; Mules departed.

"Why, our friend's as sore as a skinned bear," said Scrymgeour.

"Hush!" Adair said, with a side glance at the "younkers." "Here, White Pappleton! go and see how the wind is! Black Pappleton, find out when we're going to sail."

"Uncle said we were to finish our sums."

"Come, sir, start! The fork's in the beam!" cried Adair, using an ancient expression, which signifies that the youngsters' bedtime is come; and is still used as a formula by stern gentlemen, for getting rid of them.

The boys departed on their missions.

"You see the kind of vessel you're come into," said Adair to Forbessy, "everything's spoilt, by what they call 'Paternal Government.'"

"I often wonder, do you know," said Forbessy, raising himself meditatively from the lockers, where he lay, "floating many a rood," "whether the service *is* going to the devil!"

"I've wondered too, about that," said Adair.

You have wondered likewise about it, have you not, reader? Has it ever occurred to you, that one unhappy thing is—that so few people believe either in the service or the devil?

"I like the old service, I confess," said Forbessy.

"And I swear I do too," Adair said. "Only there's nothing to do, at all events here. There's no work, and they give stations and ships to old women."

The assistant-surgeon awoke at this moment, and coughed loudly—which was civil—for it gave you warning to mind what you said, and not get "reported;" for Mr. Filbert kept watch and ward over the moral condition of the berth, and "had a duty to perform," and was the senior in years in the mess, and "enjoyed the commander's confidence," and was red-haired and hideous to behold, and of very sound principles indeed. He had all the severe qualities this description implies, and the one weakness of being somewhat given to good and copious eating; for there is more in "birth" than my friend Fitz-Goldner believes—and Mr. Filbert was the son of a dissenting minister, who married his cook.

CHAPTER II.

SCRYMGEOUR was left alone in the berth in a few minutes, for there was a shrill pipe through the ship, and the hands were "turned up." The *Bloater* was going to sea that evening. A pile of loaves came down for the use of the mess. Mr. Adair's "watch-stock" luckily was not stopped—indeed, had the solemn Hackles spied that comfortable bundle, it would have been, for it comprised claret, curaçoa, pickled salmon, anchovies, and marmalade. A second bundle, addressed to the same youth, from the circulating-library of Mr. Muir, brought him some novels. But let not the reader be alarmed. It is not a little wine-and-water and a novel that will take the service to the devil—or, God help the wicked!

The *Bloater* was towed out by the *Dragon*—Captain Kraggles, M.P. The captain stood with an oratorical air on his paddle-box, for he was a statesman on board ship, and a sailor in Parliament—as far, at least, as he was capable of being either, anywhere. The ministry, whose property he was, used him at home or abroad according to their convenience. "A cap by night, a stocking all the day," might have made his motto!

Already the *Bloater* was right off the harbour's mouth; the *Dragon* had cast off, and had run in again, in time for the ball at Mr. Porwiggle's. But the *Bloater* hove too, and hovered off the harbour's mouth—chop, chopping, in a light swell, with a curling, blueish-grey sea on one side, and the white island, radiant in the sunset, on the other. Why was she hove to? Scrymgeour had heard the order to back the maintop-sail, and was wondering, when a quartermaster came smartly down to the berth door.

"Mr. Forbessy, sir?"

"That's right."

"Captain wants you, sir, please."

Away bounded Scrymgeour, and gained the upper deck. The men were all at their posts, and stared at the stranger's face as he passed aft. The second lieutenant put up an eyeglass at him; Joe Tender, the master, had a stare; and under this battery, he reached the captain, who was standing with Mr. Hackles.

"This, sir, is our new young gentlemen," said Mr. Hackles, speaking in his slow way. Scrymgeour bowed.

"Ah, well. You succeed Mr. Trimmer," said Captain Pappleton. "Not in the footsteps of Trimmer, I hope! But however, Mr. Forbessy, this, as yet (and the career of Trimmer was not long!) has been a happy and united vessel. I feel myself responsible for the welfare—spiritual and temporal—of my youngsters,—Mr. Adair!" Here he suddenly broke off, with a shout.

"Sir," said Adair, coming forward, and touching his cap.

"Hands out of pockets, sir!"

The marines, who were standing in a row holding the main braces, turned away their heads, and tittered—visibly, one would think—but was not the captain intent on the youngster's spiritual welfare?

"To resume—Mr. Forbessy, have you been vaccinated?" said the captain, as suddenly as before.

"Sir? Yes, sir," Forbessy said, checking himself, and surprised.

"Hem. Well! I was going to say—but we will have other questions by-and-by. Mr. Trimmer" (it was evident that that misguided youth had left a deep impression on the captain) "was indifferent to spiritual considerations; and when I urged him to show some curiosity in such subjects, he asked me whether Shem, Ham, and Japhet kept three watches in the ark! But that is over, let us be thankful. Now, Mr. Forbessy, I hope you will get on better; and I shall impose your first duty on you, now. Eh, Mr. Hackles—we may, I think?"

"Such is my view, Captain Pappleton."

An order was given, a pipe sounded, and the first cutter was manned and alongside pretty quickly. The coxswain came with a bundle of flags under his arm, and reported the boat ready.

"Now, Mr. Forbessy, you will take the cutter, and land at the point there," indicating it in the distance, "and wait for *a person* who will come off with you." Here the captain gave a sort of lurid grin and chuckle, which Forbessy could not understand. "You will bring that person off."

Forbessy jumped into the boat, "shoved off," and the seedy-looking *Bloater* was left behind, with her maintopsail keeping her in check, and dodging heavily and slowly. The boat's crew showed an indication to chat together; but Mr. Forbessy, who was astounded at that kind of thing, to which he was utterly unused, stopped it, with a "silence fore and aft." There seemed a loose, happy-go-lucky way of doing things, generally, which did not fall in with Scrymgeour's notions at all.

A smart pull brought them to the place where they were to wait. There was nobody in sight. Here, again, Forbessy was suprised to find that the crew seemed to expect leave to go and have recreation at the wine-shops. He would not suffer a man to leave the boat, and told them so; and told them that they knew "devilish well" (which was his highly improper expression) that they had no right to expect it. And as they *did* know that they had no such right, they sat, contentedly enough, when they saw from the young officer's manner that he was perfectly in earnest, and knew what he was about. Only, they had been used to be governed in a slovenly way by White Pappleton and Black Pappleton (for the nicknames given in messes usually find their way to the lower deck, and become familiarly naturalised there), as they spoke of them. And when they were brought up before the captain, he sometimes threatened, and always "maundered"—and it all depended on his poor old digestion whether he flogged or did not flog. So that he never governed like a man. Oh, you gentlemen (and many of you, particularly the old war ones, I admire sincerely) who say that the "service is going to the devil," when idle

youngsters drink champagne, don't you think that putting the Booby Booings and the Pappletons in power, has more to do with it? But we are getting too serious.

Scrymgeour was sitting in the stern of the boat, and looking seaward, where there was a breeze springing up, when he heard a voice call out "*Bloater's boat!*" At that voice, the coxswain jumped up, and began arranging the flags.

And Scrymgeour started up too, and saw nobody but a lady in black with a veil on, and in her hand a bandbox.

"*Bloater's* boat!" she cried again, as she came within ten yards of the landing-place.

"Mrs. Pappleton, sir," said the coxswain, with an eager voice in Scrymgeour's ear. "Mrs. Pappleton."

"God bless us," muttered Scrymgeour, involuntarily. Then, he rose up, and with becoming gallantry left the boat, and received the lady; and explained that he had not known who it was he was to expect, &c.

"One of Pappleton's surprises! One of Pappleton's surprises!" said the lady, who was indeed that gallant officer's wife. "Your arm, sir. Thank you."

She leaned on his arm, like a couple of tons' weight, for an instant, and in another was in the stern-sheets. "Better step the mast, eh?" she said; "I think she'll fetch the ship close hauled!"

"Yes. Indeed I think so, madam. Up mast there," cried Forbessy, in a flurry of astonishment. "Shove off—haul aft!"

The breeze blew—the boat shot out—Forbessy in a half dream of surprise. Mrs. P. covered herself round and round with flags as comfortably as possible, and removing her veil entirely, disclosed to view a rather fine though too masculine face. She planted her large feet on the gratings with that energy which marks the decided female.

"Luff a little, my good man," said she, to the coxswain presently. "Well!"

The boat shot very cleverly along. "A little pull more at the sheet," said Mrs. Pappleton, and "well" again.

"And Pappleton did not inform you who you were to bring off, eh? So like him. It is strange to see a man preserve his cheerfulness with all these responsibilities on his head. The admiral, Sir Booby, has been kind enough to let my husband (steady it is!) take me with him to the Ionian Islands. You are aware that this could not have been permitted in the old days. But now, Mr. Forbessy—for, of course, you are the Mr. Forbessy who was to join us?—matters are more humanely managed than they used to be. Sir Booby Booing is remarkable for his courtesy. Keep her away!"

The cutter bore up a point or two, and fetched alongside remarkably well. Mrs. Pappleton had to be hoisted in. There was accordingly a whip got on the main-yard. "Hands to the whip!" called the first lieutenant. "Hands to clear the family boat," muttered the cynical boatswain, in a low tone; and in she rounded, sitting as composedly in the chair as if she was a magistrate administering justice.

The worthy captain received her with a "Well my dear!" scarcely refraining from a connubial salute in public.

"What a hold himage he makes of himself," muttered Mr. Crabb, the boatswain, in Forbessy's hearing. "What a himage he is! Move on there," and Mr. Crabb relieved his feelings by pegging into an idle "waister" with his "colt."

"Make sail," called the first lieutenant. "Main tack, and main brace, there!" The yard swung; the tack came down; and the *Bloater* moved on on her course, leaving white Malta settling into the dusky sea behind.

So Forbessy descended into the berth this time with his eyes considerably opened as to the nature of the *Bloater*. The berth bore evidence to the presence of Mr. Mules, who had been taking advantage of everybody's being on deck to complete the ironing of his collars. Adair came down, sniffing in a sarcastic manner presently.

"Hollo, mangling going on again," that youth cried out. "Smell like singeing a goose—you have not burnt yourself, have you?"

"Mr. Adair, I shall have to report you to Captain Pappleton," said Mules, severely.

"The deuce you will," said Adair, sneeringly. "You're his fifteenth cousin, I suppose."

"We are familiar with that sneer," said Mules, with a look of martyrdom. "I appeal to our new messmate, if it be justifiable. But perhaps Mr. Forbessy is interested——"

"What, another relation?" Adair cried.

"I'm of a Lancashire family," said Forbessy, quietly.

"Oh, there's no fear of your being related, then."

And so this little skirmish went off; and it had just concluded, when the captain's steward came to present his master's compliments, and a cake of Mrs. Pappleton's making, to the mess.

"The mess presents its compliments, and is extremely obliged to Mrs. P.," said the polite Mules. "At least, if I may make myself the mouthpiece," he added, "I think that we join in that acknowledgment, and fulfil the *usages* of *society*."

The captain's steward lingered a moment, but seeing nothing else forthcoming, departed. It was not quite clear why he did linger, by the bye. Adair used to say that Captain Pappleton expected a couple of brace of wild ducks, or some little acknowledgment of that kind. But this was probably his scandal. Then, Trimmer professed to have submitted one cake to an anatomical examination, and to have discovered a noticeable paucity of plums. But we know that Trimmer was a "scoffer," and that Captain Pappleton had to get him removed from the vessel, for fear of his contaminating the others. We are not to be misled by him!

The evening set in, in the same pleasant way as the afternoon had been spent. White Pappleton and Black Pappleton went to their hammocks at half-past eight; the assistant-surgeon regaled himself with a snug little supper, eating with that peculiar gusto and critical dwelling on details which distinguishes the *gourmand* whose range is limited. Gluttony does not enter into the list of evil passions,

according to some people, and Filbert seemed to think not. It was a great picture to behold him rousing himself from a sort of torpor which came over him in the evening, about eight, and calling "Boy!" It was then that the keen blue eyes of Adair woke up with delight, and he nudged Forbessy that he might enjoy another Bloaterian *spectacle*.

"Boy, who went for the ship's beef this morning?" If the answer was, "Mr. Adair," Filbert's jaw fell: for as often as Mr. Adair went, Mr. Adair confiscated the kidneys for his peculiar breakfast, and had them solemnly devilled. But if the answer were "Mr. Pappleton, sir," the eye of Filbert gleamed with joy. For the "younker" dared not, of course, imitate Mr. Adair; and Filbert had the kidneys reserved to figure that evening on toast. People who remember the Rev. Helluo Filbert, who presided over a chapel (what at Oxford they call a "schism-shop") at Plymouth, have declared that eye hereditary. Helluo used to give out, they say—

"The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want,"

with a look that seemed to say, "No! no!—supper, presently."

While Filbert fed, Mules employed himself in his more elegant way. He collected and arranged his cards—the results of his last campaigns in harbour,—the "at homes" of the Registrar of Tubs, and copied music; and looked after his whiskers; and made notes of the little commissions he was to execute in the Ionian Islands, or the Archipelago. He and Filbert were pretty good friends, and, at all events, never thwarted each other; for though Filbert professed to believe balls and theatres to be "works of darkness," yet he knew that they were respectable; and as pietists are always flunkeys—one of the safest rules I know—he could not venture to quarrel with Mules for imitating the very wealthiest people. Though, I dare say, like other pretty good friends, they kept "worldling" and "glutton" ready to fling at each other, in case a rupture should make them come in handy—just as in a neighbouring nation, the sword which Monsieur le Capitaine wears for an ornament and a civility at your ball, is quite ready to be run through you, if a political move requires it.

Scrymgeour had to take charge of a watch, and that very night had the middle watch to keep. Pappleton had a summer cabin under the poop—a luxury unknown, I believe, in early times, but which no "family ship" can very well be without. I don't answer for rumours —indeed I am incredulous about them—and particularly when they come from your fellows whose levity is notorious—your Trimmers, your Pug Welbys, and *hoc genus omne*,—as Sir Booby once said, with a correctness which surprised me. But I have heard that in one family ship there was a strong probability of its being necessary to *muffle the wheel, and lay down straw on the quarter-deck*. Such was the phrase of the humourist Snigg, of the *Patagonian*, at all events, who seemed to think that if you turned a man-of-war into a private dwelling-house, you ought to have everything to match, as occasion requires. This sneer must not prevent us from admitting that, if a gallant officer of

middle age can manage to keep his family without having rent and taxes to pay, it's only natural that he should. "It's only natural"—that was always my old messmate Toadyley's indignant way of vindicating everybody; "If you were in such and such a position," he added, "you would be just as bad." Well, perhaps he was right. By the bye, let me add that the domestic preparations above hinted at were not likely to be needed in the *Bloater*. The captain's marriage had been without offspring these years past. For aught I know the question was talked over among his friends. But, at all events, a summer cabin was a convenient sitting-room; then, its window commanded a view of the decks, and *an eye* was on Mr. Adair, at times, we may be sure.

Then, as Scrymgeour found, it was necessary to talk aside, when you began to know the *Bloater* a little better. Like many other ships, it was divided into factions. The second-lieutenant, in spite of the ties of kindred, had an idea that he was the real disciplinarian; that there was not enough flogging for one thing. Give Jack Rattle the command, and you'd see! D—n 'em; he'd find a way to get the work done, or he'd know the reason why! This gentleman thought Pappleton an old woman, and treated Mrs. Pappleton with distant and haughty politeness. Adair rather leaned to this officer, who in his turn was civil to Adair, as Adair was by no means popular with the captain. The anti-Pappleton party included the cynic Crabb, the boatswain—a first-rate sailor—and who had a profound contempt for all old women, by land or by sea, in uniform or in petticoats. "Him a sailor!" muttered Crabb. "My old grandmother a sailor!" Crabb's old grandmother, whoever she may have been, had the honour of supplying many of his illustrations. In particular, he would tauntingly ask the seamen, when they were slow in their operations, whether they were waiting for his old grandmother to come and do it?—but sometimes he implied that she would have to be brought from a *locale* where it is probable that, though only Crabb's grandmother, she is in very good company.

Scrymgeour received paternal communications from Captain Pappleton, at an early period. "Mr. Forbessy," for instance, it would be, "would you test young Mr. Pappleton's proficiency in French?" At another time, the worthy Mrs. Pappleton would inquire concerning Mr. Forbessy's family, and—would he go on shore in the cutter at Bokharia, and inquire after that charming old lady the consul's mother? and just bring off the silk she ordered at so-and-so's? and send the carpenter's mate aft to put a shelf in the bookcase? "By Jove," thought Forbessy, "I would not mind if it was Mary Queen of Scots, but——!" It was too bad. One can fancy how comfortable a fellow became in the *Bloater*. "Sir," said Adair, one morning to the captain, when he was asking him, in a pompous, angry way, *à propos* of something, "how the 'Busy Bee!'" acted in the way of example. "Sir," said he, "there's nothing about him in the Admiralty Regulations."

CHAPTER III.

THE *Bloater* arrived in the Ionian Islands towards the fall of summer. I suppose she had instructions to support the policy of the Lord High Commissioner. Very mysterious duties devolve on our captains in these times. They have to assist the movements going forward in the East, and to become the semi-conscious executants of all kinds of party tactics. Of course I do not pretend to fathom the policy which was actually being carried on at this time; but I know that our Ionian policy must be distinguished by a graceful variety: for the government devolves sometimes on a naval man, sometimes on a soldier, and sometimes on a civilian. Neither can we believe a policy to be wise which first leads to insurrections, and then puts them down by bloodshed, and then disguises the details to suit Parliament, and the newspapers.

But it is one of the beauties of life, that while great and serious matters are transacting at the bottom, ordinary jollity is going on on the surface of life. Sir Charles Smithers might positively be doing something which would lead presently to bloodshed, while all the while Lady Smithers would be "at home" to a fashionable company. Dinners, and luncheons, and picnics would be going forward, and the business part of affairs be the last that anybody of the English society at large thought about. As a general rule, you know no more of what you are actually achieving in a ship than the powder in a shell does. Thus, I remember, while the Syrian war was going forward, we poor mids. got most of our information about the war from *Galignani*, and what we chiefly knew about the squadron was, that old Fungus, of the *Preposterous*, had been rapped over the knuckles by Napier for his inattention to gunnery; that Snogg, of the *Harold*, had the gout; that potatoes were getting very low, and that there was scarcely a fellow in the fleet who had a clean shirt left!

When the *Bloater* arrived at a place, one of Captain Pappleton's earliest cares was to plant Mrs. P. comfortably with a family. Mention has been made in a previous chapter of the consul of Bokharia that pleasant, green island. No sooner did the *Bloater* anchor there, than the summer cabin under the poop was all in commotion. A man came running with a carpet-bag; another bore a bandbox; Crabb, the boatswain, walking along the waist, muttering to himself as usual. "Mr. Crabb, call away the gig," cried the captain. "Yes, sir!—Way, there, gigs! (What a himage he is! You're a officer, ain't you, now? My old grandmother a bishop!) Look sharp, there!"

Mrs. Pappleton emerges on deck in visiting costume. "Better have the whip and chair ready," says the captain. "Whip on the main-yard," cries Mr. Crabb, again. ("They ain't ankles to be looked at!"

with a ferocious sneer this time). So the lady is hoisted out into the boat, the captain descends the side, Mr. Adair has taken his seat previously, as in duty bound. The boat shoves off, leaving Mr. Forbessy keeping his forenoon watch. Mrs. Pappleton wraps the flags round her to the honour of the ensigns of Europe, and away flies the gig to the shore, as straight as a crow to a field of grain.

And indeed Captain Pappleton's present flight was with much the same purpose as the crow's. No sooner did the boat touch the shore than the excellent man ordered the coxswain to get out the carpet-bag. "And Mr. Adair," he said, "follow Mrs. Pappleton and myself."

So off they set towards the little Greek village of Bokharia (see the blue-book "Despatch 291," for the subsequent hanging of Cockalearia by an enlightened Government there)—pleasant little Bokharia. The tiny little white house with the awnings over the balcony, was the consul's. Few houses are more snug in any foreign part than those of the English consuls—except, perhaps, that of the English missionaries. Who establishes a little nook of comfort in the heart of Africa?—the missionary. Who has a good dish of curry for you?—the missionary. Whose rum is the admiration of the district?—the missionary's!

As a footboy trots through Gower Street on a Sunday morning, carrying after Mrs. Haggles the Bible and Prayer-book, which are too heavy for her (though how she managed a few years ago to carry those much heavier weights, the canisters of sago and rice in Shoreditch, must remain a mystery), so Mr. Adair followed captain and Mrs. Pappleton. They drew near the cheerful dwelling aforesaid; and indeed it was time, for beads of perspiration stood on the Pappletonian brow. "Oh, Lord!" he muttered in his peculiar way, "hot work this!"

As they arrived at the entrance, a figure presented itself at the gate, that of a cheerful individual whose countenance was not without the characteristics of eccentric humour. He advanced with a look, which like Burleigh's nod in the "Critic," expressed a great deal. You know those faces reader? It seemed to say, "Who is this old fellow? Commands the man-of-war in the offing I suppose. Brought his wife to stop, upon my honour; hanged if he shall though." All this, an acute observer (need I say, that Pappleton was no such thing) might have read at once in the consul's countenance; and indeed, there are faces a great deal handsomer where you can read at much greater length, and very pleasant reading too.

Now it was always the notion of Captain Pappleton that he did honour to a consul by visiting him. I can no more explain why or how he held this notion, than I can explain other mysteries of the age, but it was his notion.

And how was such an idea likely to be encouraged by a gentleman like Mr. Consul Harbree? For Mr. Harbree was a man of singular talent and even reputation. Family misfortunes forced Mr. Harbree to begin early turning his talents and culture to account. He began to write. He did not like the career, for he found himself in a little while claimed as a "brother" by some of the vulgarest and most illiterate dogs in Europe; and received several prospectuses from societies who

wanted to "ameliorate his condition." Mr. Harbree, however, got this consulate, which barely found him in comforts, and was now engaged in classical researches. Humming the *Persicos odi*, decked in a fez that glittered like a poppy, loosely enveloped in a white shooting-coat, advanced Mr. Harbree to the gate.

"Good morning, sir," said Captain Pappleton. "I command H.M.S. *Bloater*, and come to wait on you," and here he glanced at the carpet-bag (which in the hand of the faithful mid. was calmly awaiting its invitation inside), and then duly introducing Mrs. P. Mr. Adair of course was in the background with the luggage. Where else should the midshipman be, I would like to know?

"Good morning, sir," said Harbree. Harbree was an old stager and magazinist, and took in Pappleton at a glance. "Come from Corfu, Captain Pappleton?"

"We have been there sir, and on a cruise." Still the gates moved not.

"I don't know that I shall trouble you much," said the consul. "Everything goes quietly on with us in Bokharia at present; but will you sit down a few minutes?"

Sit down a few minutes! Captain Pappleton was in the most extraordinary amazement. "Thank you," he said, rather flurried.

"And won't your friend bring the carpet-bag inside while you sit down?"

"Won't my friend bring the carpet bag inside?" The reader must fancy the captain revolving these words in a kind of mental ventriloquism,—for if ventriloquism be a speaking from the belly, why then Pappleton undoubtedly had a famous organ of speech.

"This way," said Harbree. "Excuse the smell of smoke."

No apology could possibly be more needed. The room was perfumed with tobacco smoke beyond the dreams of anything short of a divan keeper.

They sat down, however. The consul chatted affably enough. But why it was I know not—I suppose it must be attributed to the absurd way of cutting down salaries (they make it a good stroke of strategy to keep some hundred gentlemen at starvation point in order to conciliate demagogues in these times)—Mr. Harbree never even asked the captain if "he had a month on him." This was Jack Rattle's expression. And the captain had to return on board with wife and carpet-bag, after the most rascally reception ever vouchsafed to a British officer.

Everybody seemed to be aware of the failure, as the captain went over the gangway on board again. He was in a fine temper we may be sure, and he actually looked yellow when he was in a bad humour, our friend Pappleton: nature having arranged him in such a way as to put him in quarantine, by making him hoist a yellow flag when he had pestilence inside. It is curious to observe how, in a man-of-war, everything gets known to "all hands." I don't only mean that things get transmitted in the way of direct reports; as for instance, in the case of the brig *Surf*, where Lieut. Hireling learned all that went on in the midshipmen's berth by getting the serjeant of marines to keep his eye

MR. PAPPLETON'S RECEPTION AT THE CONSUL'S.—p. 18.

on the proceedings, &c. I mean that almost all the peculiarities, all the antecedents, all the very shore adventures of the officers, their oddities of manner and temper also are as perfectly well known on the lower deck as among the officers. That Commander Miffin was refused at Malta by Miss Migg; that he went down on his knees and that his wig fell off while in that attitude; that Paddy Raker galloped a horse from Bosketto to Valetta till it fell down dead at the gate, and went on board the *Ragman* again without saying a word to anybody; that Lord Poodle rode over an old woman "for a lark," and broke her leg, and gave her a five-pound note, "poor old devil," &c.—all these stories are described, one may observe, with the same gusto on the lower deck as anywhere else. And it must be encouraging to reflect that some officers set such an excellent example, and diffuse an air of manly heroism and purity through the vessels to which they belong!

So, of course, it flew about the *Bloater* how Captain Pappleton had been treated by the consul. Mr. Crabb had a little party, it chanced, that evening in his cabin, entertaining Mr. Slide, the gunner, and Mr. Plane, the carpenter. The warrant officers gave each other these little entertainments with all due form. Crabb sat on his bed, a curious little place of repose, covered with a patched quilt. His guests took their seats in the same genial spirit. A black bottle makes its appearance. "To you, gentlemen," says Crabb. "Same to you, Mr. Crabb," says Slide. "Here's to you," says Plane. "Mrs. Crabb's doing well I hope," says Slide. "The old woman's all right——Articles of food are still dear," mentions Crabb, who is a radical in politics, "as must be expected, governed as we are in these ere times.——I grants—but, hillo—does my d—d whelp of a boy set a tumbler like that afore a gentleman? D—n him, I'll cut his liver out!"

The boy, who is summoned by a frightful roar, makes his appearance with a better tumbler; turning the corner of the cabin as he goes out, to avoid the "colt," with a dexterity acquired by long practice, by which he makes his hinder portion disappear in a twinkling.

"Well," says Mr. Crabb, "the old gentleman's had a disappointment again. What a himage he is! There's no vulture equal to him, as ever I heard of."

The mess of the *Bloater* assembled as usual that evening, and Forbessy and Adair were having a little quiet *écarté*. Enter Mr. Filbert, who never saw a pack of cards in the mess before.

"Mr. Adair!"

"Well?" said Adair, shortly, and looking round for an instant.

"I never saw such a picture as that before, in this mess!"

"As what? Forbessy, propose."

"Mr. Adair!" in a higher key. "Don't bore," said Adair.

Now, Mr. Filbert paused. You know my dear "younkers," if you read these pages, and will permit me so to address you, that when a "younker" is doing anything which an "oldster" is countenancing, the mess "bully" always hesitates for fear of the "oldster." It may be laid down, I think, as a rule, that a Scotch assistant-surgeon is the most perfect species of bully known, but an English one with a turn

for cant is not far short of him, particularly if he be a "west country" gentleman.

"Mr. Mules, perhaps, you will look in here," said Filbert, turning round to the "office" of that polished clerk, a dog-hole behind the main hatchway ladder, a considerable share of which was occupied by the mainmast. In it Mr. Mules discharged the duties of his post, answered the official letters of the captain, kept the ship's books, and the letters of Emily Potts. Miles jilted Miss Potts, I regret to say, but preserved the poor little girl's letters as testimonies to his powers of attraction.

He emerged at Filbert's voice from this Tusculum; and with pen behind ear stood alongside him. Meanwhile, the game went on.

"What's all this about?" said Forbessy, looking up for the first time.

"I say, sir," began Mr. Filbert, severely, "that card-playing cannot be allowed in a mess where I have any control."

"And who the deuce gave you any control, my good fellow?" Forbessy asked.

"Mr. Mules, you hear that?"

"I am sorry to say I do," said Mules. "And this in a mess too where I had hoped we were distinguished by a fraternal feeling, the whole being also under the restraint of rules of politeness?" Here he adjusted the collar, the ironing of which was mentioned in our last chapter. Adair rubbed his hands with comic delight. And still the game went on.

"I must, then," said Filbert, "report the circumstance to Captain Pappleton."

And away went Filbert and Mules.

"White and Black Pappleton!" cried Adair, "go on deck for exercise." The meagre-looking boys departed accordingly; and soon after they had done so, the white one came running back to say, that the mail had just arrived.

This very incident happened to prevent Mr. Filbert's complaint. For the mail in question brought a letter to Lieutenant Hackles, who had married Filbert's sister, complaining of the conduct of a young Filbert, who threatened to ruin the family by wearing a moustache. Mr. Hackles communicated the mournful intelligence to his cousin the captain. The captain told it to his wife. The wife snubbed Filbert the moment she saw him, and drove the "report" out of his head.

But this was not all. Captain Pappleton had trouble very shortly on his hands, which kept the midshipmen's affairs out of his head. That night one of the forecastle men, having obtained by what Captain Green used to call "collision," (meaning "collusion") with his messmates, a large extra supply supply of grog, became heavily intoxicated. This state having developed in him a latent propensity to fight, he thrashed a corporal of marines. When brought before the officer of the watch, Jack Rattle, for inspection, he called that officer a "Jack in the box," a "fourpenny jack in the box," "a whipper-snapper." He was put in irons, and Pappleton resolved to flog him.

Accordingly, one morning, some of the hands were turned up to

"attend punishment." Up came the men and clustered before the mainmast in the regular way. The officers assembled in their cocked hats and full uniform—the gentlemen who had had the middle watch looking very sleepy and rough about the chin. The apparatus was all prepared, small pans of water—neat canvass bag with "cat" in it.

At last, out came Captain Pappleton, from the summer cabin, looking as nervous as if he himself were about to be operated on. He came forward, fidgeted about, took the warrant from the hands of Mr. Mules, whose appearance on these occasions was always extremely elegant, and gave a certain air of breeding to the business. "Hem, hem," said Captain Pappleton, and he glanced at the summer cabin's window.

You might have noticed glances exchanged in several parts of the crowd at that moment; for everybody knew that inside that cabin was Mrs. Pappleton. It is a delicate matter to have your family on board on these occasions. The late lamented Lord Crimper, they say, a genuine disciplinarian, had a tender, growing family, in H.M.S. *Jailbird*, who looked on these exhibitions (which they particularly watched) as amusing and exciting spectacles of their childhood. "Fog him, pa," was the pure and innocent young heir's exclamation, on the occasion of a "report," made in his hearing. Happy father! Happy child!

"Hem," began Pappleton. "I say it, my men—and always have—that drunkenness—swearing and drunkenness—the man who would make a beast of himself—not that I wish to flog—the discipline of the *Bloater*. Hem. Strip, Jones."

A great burly fellow, with thews like ropes, stripped accordingly. Again, you might have observed eyes fixed on the summer cabin.

Down fell number "one" on Jones's splendid shoulders, and he gave a roar like a bull. At that instant, the cabin bell gave a sharp ringing, sounding through and through the silent ship like a cry, sharp as the cry a snipe gives when he rises.

"Stop," said the captain, waving his hand. He moved off rapidly to the cabin. There was a dead pause, He came forward again.

"Hem! Jones, are you sorry, eh, sir?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well. If I let you off this time" (here Crabb began adjusting the tails of the cat, which indeed he played with, as he may in his young days have wantonly played with Mrs. Crabb's ringlets); "you'll keep sober, eh?"

"Yes, sir."

"Cast him off. Pipe down. Pipe to breakfast."

"Well," muttered Crabb, "you are a himage. A feller as ud a taken his four-dozen same as his breakfast, if he hadn't right well known Mistress P. was aboard!"

The boatswain displayed his characteristic sagacity on this occasion, but who can blame the sturdy Jones, who condescended to roar (which had never been his custom in other ships), presuming on the weakness of Mrs. Pappleton's nerves? Happy fellow, to be in a happy and united "family ship!"

"Mules," said young Adair, in his reckless way, at breakfast that morning, eating too the devilled kidneys (done to a turn) right under Mr. Filbert's nose,—"Mules, is Jones any *relation* to the Pappletons?"

Mules dropped his knife with astonishment, and uttered not a word. Oh, oh! Mr. Adair, we exclaim, you will repent this audacity, sir. Yes, yes, an eye is on you, Mr. Adair, you may be sure!

CHAPTER IV.

The disgraceful conduct of Mr. Harbree, consul at Bokharia (which I have not recorded without indignation, even at this distance of time), did not encourage Captain Pappleton to remain long in the harbour of that island. The island is not lively, except perhaps during the currant season. Then, indeed, when the bright-coloured crowds go swarming among the acres of fat herbage, when Zoe's Cap lies as open as her young heart, to receive the fruit that a sweet heaven and a sweet earth have produced between them; why then we forget that we are satirical, and remember only that we are young! But at present we are bent on other matters; nor did the *Bloater* this year enjoy the season in question. The English aspect of Bokharia, also, is not agreeable. Bull of the bank, there—Ponderous the agent—the detachment of the muffs were, somehow, not good specimens that year. Harbree scarcely associated with his countrymen at all. He lived and smoked (as far as he did either in company) with the leading natives; and prowled about to find men who had known Byron, or Anastasius Hope. The usual recourse of dulness is scandal, so the English aforesaid had tales to tell of Harbree, who for his part, troubled himself little about what they said of him; and, when provoked, his only vengeance was a Latin epigram; which (for an obvious reason) could not much wound the feelings of gentlemen assailed!

The *Bloater* left Bokharia two days after the scene in which Jones figured so fortunately. She anchored again at a smaller island; and there Captain Pappleton had an opportunity of carrying on a species of exercise which he much delighted in. This exercise was an exciting and amusing one—one calculated to gratify at once his own love of command, and Mrs. Pappleton's feminine love of a spectacle. The exercise in question was a sham fight. About this time a kind of mania had seized our naval authorities—a mania for military exercises. Nothing would satisfy Sir Booby Booing but to have all the seamen landed in the morning, and drilled and marched about like so many regular troops. The opportunity for display was excellent;—so Jack Splinter of the *Regina*, and Tom Bowles of the *Flasher*, were to be observed, galloping about the grounds, like hussars—*minus* the brilliant garb—but *plus*—a tumble every twenty minutes. Captain Pappleton was an imitator of the admiral in everything; and he now

thought it would be a fine thing to have a field-day, probably to be repeated on some future occasion, under more splendid auspices. Corfu was likely to have a fashionable season ere long; indeed there was reason to expect something attractive on that station, from certain indications well known to old Mediterranean cruisers. What were these?—asks the reader. Why—the corvette *Papillon* (taken from the French last war), Lord Heartsease commanding—had relieved the *Herring*, commanded by Captain Brown. Now, do you understand? Brown was off to Beyrout to relieve Trevor, who was bored; and Jenks was off to Candia to replace Fitz-Amy who was hipped! These movements are quite sufficient to teach an old stager how the wind is. As we know that summer is quite set in when the swallows show themselves in their glowing purple, so we know that there is gaiety in prospect when the Heartseases and the Trevors come down to stations instead of the Browns and the Jenkses. Many a heart beat joyfully when the sounds of *the piano* of Lord Heartsease floated merrily over the waters of the harbour of Corcyra.

Captain Pappleton was a proud man when the divisions fell in, along each side of the deck. Blank cartridges had been served out. The boats were alongside. 1st division, Mr. Battle, and Mr. Forbessy, with White Pappleton. 2nd division, Mr. Hackles, and Mr. Adair, with Black Pappleton.

"My dear," said Pappleton to Mrs. Pappleton, "come and inspect the forces!" This being a joke (you knew always that Pappleton was making a joke—he grinned so!), Hackles laughed solemnly, and looked at Forbessy as much as to say, "Smile, sir, when your *superior officer* jokes!" Forbessy roared, and Mr. Adair likewise:—to be sure, is was at the figure Pappleton cut with his coat buttoned, in a military manner, but it did equally well as a laugh of approval. "Attention!" called out the captain, and he and Mrs. P. marched along, inspecting the lines.

It was now a matter of doubt what particular form the operations should assume. Should Pappleton fortify a spot (say a dunghill to begin with!), and establishing himself there, with one division, let the other attack it, and so display his skill in defence. Should he send Rattle on shore with a party to oppose a boat-landing, and himself command the boat attack, and lead on his men to victory, trying the dunghill defence in the afternoon? These were questions. Crabb's fixed opinion remained, that the whole affair was a humbug, and quite unworthy of the nautical intellect.

What was wanted, the captain gradually felt, was some plan that would give an opportunity for *strategy*. Where's the good of being a man of deep intellect if you don't get an opportunity of displaying it? Accordingly, he resolved on rather extended operations. He would command the first division. A flagstaff should be hoisted on the hill in the centre of the island. The aim of the day should be to gain the final command of that position.

The boats shoved off; Mrs. Pappleton waving her handkerchief from the poop, to the great commander. "Silence in the boats," cried the captain; and the coxswain behind him winked at the nearest rower,

who instantly caught a crab, and in doing so kicked over a water-keg, the bung of which was out. In recovering himself, a back stroke of the oar flung a light whistle of spray off the sea, which curiously shot directly into the Pappletonian countenance. But these little mishaps were instantly remedied.

When the boats landed, the divisions separated, each to pursue a distinct course, as arranged before meeting to combat. The afternoon was warm and the country very bushy, and the captain (who was followed by Forbessy and Rattle) was in a state of great prespiration. The division broke into parties, according to a manœuvre invented by the great intellect at its head. Nothing would satisfy the captain, but detaching himself to "reconnoitre." He proceeded with a small body to achieve a "surprise."

"Hush!" he exclaimed, suddenly, "Lie down. An enemy approaching!"

The band lay down: and the captain, who had been recently reading a novel of Cooper's, in which was an account of the way in which the Indian listens for a footstep, put his ear to the ground. The bushes cracked and rustled. In lowering his ear in this manner, the captain necessarily elevated another portion of his person, which was probably the cause of his ambush being discovered by the advancing foe! All of a sudden a gun flashed through the thicket, the captain uttered a terrific roar, and sprang to his feet, with his broad coat tails singed frightfully.

"A prisoner, a prisoner!" roared Mr. Adair, bounding up with his party, and holding a musket obviously just discharged.

"Oh, it's you, sir, is it?" said old Pappleton, in a rage. "Look here, sir!" he cried, turning round most unpolitely.

Nothing could persuade him that this—which Mr. Adair described as an "accident of war"—was not a deeply laid scheme. And he sent Mr. Adair on board immediately; nor did he recover his warlike energy all day, so that he came on board, at last, dead beat, and in that state of maudlin peevishness which forms, in this kind of character, the natural reaction after foolish animation. Add to this that our party during the fray disturbed a wasp's-nest, and that poor little White Pappleton had a sting in the nose which made him cry,—altogether, therefore, we cannot say that the sham fight was satisfactory, unless, perhaps, to one or two seamen who got intoxicated before the close of the day.

Let us glance into the midshipman's berth at the evening hour.

"You wounded Captain Pappleton, Mr. Adair, if that's *any triumph* to you," said Mules, sneering in the Lady Ostrich style.

"His coat-tails you mean, Brummell?" said Adair.

"I mean worse than that, sir." However we are not aware that the worthy officer went into the sick-list; and any little uneasiness of manner perceptible in his walk wore off before the vessel arrived at Corfu.

Forbessy was invited "to tea" in the cabin not long after this event. Lively little evenings these were in the family ship. Tea. More water in teapot. Tea again. Midshipman passing everything. First lieu-

tenant talking of "old days" to his cousin the captain. Brief remarks on sailing-boats. Speaking when spoken to. Intervals of silence. Mulled elder. One evening this usual programme was varied. Mrs. Pappleton and her husband had Forbessy to themselves. There was a little more cordiality; and (if anything) a little more tea in the pot. Then Captain P. looked at Mrs. P., and a little signalling (indeed, Mrs. P.'s nose had somewhat of the look of one arm of a semaphore), and the captain began to address himself to our hero.

"Hem. How long have you been in the service, Mr. Forbessy?"

"Five years and three months, sir."

"You intend to devote yourself to the—hem. Do you consider yourself permanently, as it were, involved——"

In fact, what the captain was driving at was, to find out whether the profession was necessary to Mr. Forbessy, or whether Mr. Forbessy was independent of the profession. It has *been observed* that gentlemen are differently treated in the said profession according as their position in the said respect is different.

"Why, sir, I consider myself a naval man for life," said Forbessy, "of course."

"Not to be led away," here Mrs. Pappleton smiled, "into wasting your patrimony in mere idleness ashore."

"My ancestors did that for me," said Forbessy, smiling, and then for a minute looking absent and serious. "They have saved me the trouble."

Captain and Mrs. Pappleton glanced at each other across the hospitable board.

"Ah, indeed," said the captain. "Now I wonder—really I wonder—just for curiosity—whether that position—the same position, that is—is that of Mr. Adair?"

"Sir," said Forbessy, "I am not acquainted with the affairs of Mr. Adair. If I were, it would still be questionable how far I had a right to speak of them."

Pappleton turned pale, and looked quite surprised. And the rest of *that* visit to the cabin went off heavily enough we may be sure.

A few days afterwards they arrived at Corfu. Heartsease had reached the harbour, with his luxurious *Papillon*. Mention has been made of his *piano*. He had a piano in the cabin. Pic-nics and boating parties were the order of the day after this. What can be more lively than a seaport town, when a lord, a yacht, or an heiress arrives there? To be sure the lord may be a scamp; the yacht belong to a soap-boiler; and the heiress be hideous to behold; but the large heart of a garrison will pardon the wickedness of all!

It is one advantage to the service that if a captain have his wife with him he has to spend most of his time in getting her into good society. The service suffers; but let us be thankful that the service is used to it.

THE COURT-MARTIAL.*

CHAPTER I.

It has been remarked, by persons familiar with her Majesty's ships and vessels of war, that a kind of court-martial mania occasionally makes its appearance on the stations. There is a brisk run of trials for a while, and a very strong excitement, till presently the bad blood of the whole fleet has exhausted itself *pro tem.*, and things relapse into ordinary tranquillity. Now, you observe, that it is all a matter of luck, whether *your* turn, my dear reader, comes during a mania, or at an ordinary time. You shall thump your vessel ashore at a lucky period, and get off with a reprimand; whereas a few months before, while the fever lasted, you would have been "broke" for spelling Admiral Buggins's name with only one "g!" I make this philosophical remark (I get so very philosophical after a jolly evening), in remembering Maxwell Adair's account of his adventures in the court-martial way, as delivered to a very pleasant party last night, at Delormie's rooms in Suffolk Street. Happy twilight hour! Happy claret, that enriches the blood and brightens the brain! Spirit of joy and wine! thou wert with us, making the gay man witty, and the earnest man eloquent; making one dwell with happy tenderness on the saddest times of the past, and picture to oneself with cheerfulness even the faces of the lost. But I must tell you the story as Adair told it—in his own words; for, indeed, there is a happy audacity about that young gentleman's language, which it would be a pity to dull by turning it into the third person. Fancy, then, that we are assembled in the elegant rooms of the most hospitable of good-fellows, that most of us have migrated from our chairs to the ottomans, that the sunlight and the sweet summer air are streaming in, tinted by the purple curtains, and that a glory rests on the fruit and wine.

"The court-martial!" cries Delormie.

"Your auto-biography, my boy!" says Fontenoy.

"Now then!" exclaims Paldenbury, of the *Sea-lion*, who has come up on leave this morning, from Portsmouth, to black-ball Hireling at the —— Club; which achieved, Paldenbury returns by the earliest train to-morrow. Adair hems a little, helps himself to claret, and breaks into unbounded egotism without further parley. . . . . Adair *loquitur*.

"I derive my name of Adair, gentlemen, from an ancient Scotch family, which settled on the other side of the border in the time of King David. I prefix Maxwell to it because of my descent from that

* This and the sequel to it, "Mr. Adair's Narrative," are printed verbatim from Forbessy's handwriting. Both stories appear to be literally founded on fact, and (as we conjecture) to belong in point of time to the year 1845.—Ed.

much greater house, which has pastured in splendour in the dales of southern Scotland, since the days when Europe agreed to call the flower of its population by the name of gentlemen. Nigellus de Adare, if I may be permitted to ——"

"The genealogy at some future period," said Delormie, with gravity.

"Well, then, here's to his memory! Had I possessed all the lands which our patriarch called his own, it is probable I should never have joined the *Bustard* when she was commanded by Crimper; for you are aware by this time—most of you, that he who 'casts his bread *on the waters*' seldom finds it turn up at all with any butter on it! Who thinks, however, of bread-and-butter for futurity while he is a youngster? We come bounding out of school, or of the parental library, where sits our tutor; we put on a gold-lace cap, and presto! we awake, and find ourselves committed to a career! What the deuce brings most fellows into the profession, I can never make out! Half of them are not sailors born — for the sailor *nascitur, non fit* — as well as the poet. No wonder so many leave the service at nineteen and twenty—no wonder that so many who remain behind grumble all their lives long — no wonder that so many find themselves altogether — in fact—hem!—get into rows, and 'insubordination,' and, in fact, find themselves tried by courts-martial: a thing that *may* happen to a man worthy of a better destiny than the thirty-six articles provide, for those who are accused of offending them, in her 'Majesty's ships and vessels of war.' Ah! when I write my treatise on 'Courts-Martial, from a Common-sense Point of View——'"

"We will subscribe to it," said Fontenoy, interrupting. "*Perge, puer.* Treat now by example; illustrate by your tale."

"It is my intention. I don't like the abstract. If I were going, for example, to trouble my head (which I am not) with the question of 'marriage with a deceased wife's sister,' I should carefully collect instances where such unions were wished and performed, carefully inform myself of the domestic results, and decide according to *them*. In the same way, I shall not speculate on martial-law, &c. I shall tell you what happened to me; one narrative of facts is worth all the essays in the world: as one good look at our acquaintance — who had the—told you more of his real disposition than I could tell you of it in talking for a week. Shall I tell you in brief, by the bye, what I conceive to be the great cause of those factious ill-feelings in ships, which mostly cause courts-martial? 'Tis this,—that, with very many commanding officers, you must either be a favourite, or a foe; they don't like you in a medium, because they don't like you independent; and, I tell you what, they usually like dull, ordinary fellows for favourites, just as—" (here Mr. Adair paused a second, that no hearer might miss the coming *point*)—"just as—the sultans of Turkey choose their favourites — among the eunuchs. Then, add to this the consideration, that there is always a probability of a toady's being malignant. He knows the feeling about him among his companions, and has a perpetual stimulus, as he has a perpetual opportunity, to revenge himself.

"Ah! shall I ever forget the romance which stirred in my young

soul, and flushed my juvenile cheek—which was as smooth and downy as a girl's—when I first joined the *Vindicator*, that grand line-of-battle ship, at Portsmouth! I remember, to this hour, the thump, thumping of the oars in the rowlocks, as we went on board in the barge; and when I—little chubby youngster—had to walk forward across the thwarts, and found some difficulty in passing among the men, how those great fellows said, 'Tread on my shoulder, sir;' 'Take my arm, sir;' and vied with one another in helping me. Yes, there is nothing so touching as to observe—what in the navy, the army, and but few other quarters, you may still observe—the loyalty of class to class, the evident and genuine feeling of respect for a man, as a gentleman, by the brave fellows who serve him. Everybody who knows the services, knows that the men in both love to be commanded by gentlemen. This is part and parcel of European history. Tomkins, of Manchester, sneers at this kind of thing, I know." (Here Mr. Adair took a sip of claret.) "Tomkins, of Manchester, has not read history with mind, nor has a heart to feel loyalty as a sentiment. Tomkins, of Manchester, I would not give one of the *escallops* (which I carry *in chief*) off my shield, for all the gold that you have got out of the bones of your workpeople—men, women, and children. And yet, who can wonder that the old feelings of Europe wax faint, when we see how the fatal *nil admirari* is ruining the upper classes, and they allow themselves to be thrust aside—thrust down? When I publish my treatise on 'The English Gentleman viewed as a Fossil——'"

"We will *not* subscribe to that," broke in Delormie. "You are discursive!"

"To proceed, then. Mulligrub of the *Vindicator*, you all remember to have seen. He never got another ship, you know. You remember the circumstances? He stood for Bleedem; was petitioned against; —turned out;—Admiralty declined to give him the *Tartarus;* gave it to Snubber, who had got his brother in for Lying-cum-tubs. Well, poor Mulligrub is no hero we know, yet, how well I remember my profound respect for him when I joined that *Vindicator!* I would have charged anything to get a civil look from that face, which is now to me (I see him sometimes in Pall-mall) less imposing than a beadle's. All the youngsters, too, felt the same. The service was our first-love. We ran aloft, we pestered the boatswain to teach us knots, we kept night-watches, although we were excused from them in order that we might attend 'school.' School, indeed! We exclaimed that we were to be sailors, not musty scholars. But when we actually found that the naval instructor was to 'teach Latin and Greek to those who entered with some knowledge of them,' our indignation knew no bounds. Clavers used to say the man was a 'lubber:'—Clavers, who is now in the church, and who blesses his stars—as I do most heartily —that he was obliged to attend the naval instructor, and got priceless advantages from him. Surely here was a lump of young nautical enthusiasm to work upon, if it had been properly dealt with. But from our older messmates came no encouragement: the profession 'bored' them for the most part. Oh, green days of my youth! there is something refreshing in bringing that verdure before one's eyes

again. I used in those times to have to go ashore with an 'oldster,' and poor old Middleton, a mate, sometimes took me. We visited a house where lived an odd old woman, whom he called his 'aunt,' and a very pretty girl, his 'cousin.' We went for long walks, during which, *I* had always to walk in the rear, with the old woman! Innocent days! I would not now swear to that relationship, nor walk about for pleasure with that questionable old woman.

"The *Vindicator* proceeded to the Mediterranean. Clavers and I and the other youngsters somehow began to lose our enthusiasm. I now see, that if I wanted to make a young fellow a sailor, I would send him off first of all in a small craft; not to the Mediterranean, either, if I could help it. As for a line-of-battle ship, you might as well live in a town; you are one of four or five in a watch, you go occasionally to the mizen-top, you are sent messages in a cutter, you have to see hammocks stowed—all a mere routine, which teaches you nothing, and develops you not at all. There are twenty-five fellows to mess with, split into cliques, each of which has a particular relation to the ward-room cliques, which again are diversely situated with regard to the captain. Somebody, perhaps, has snubbed the chaplain, and on this point arises a war of parties. The captain and commander, say, don't hit it off: each has a faction which believes him in the right. The youngster who comes into the profession with his head and heart full of our naval history and traditions, or even, let us say, of Marryatt's stories, which are the traditions of the last war, told with immense manly vivacity, finds himself in the centre of little intrigues and gossip. Nobody talks about the war, nobody knows much about it, still less about our expeditions under Elizabeth, or our triumphs under the Protector. Bless you, Jaunty is all for Persiani, and Miggles prefers Tadolini; and as for 'Marryat,' says Prurient, 'he's dull compared with Paul de Kock!' Naval history—I'll tell you what you would have thought naval history if you had formed your notion of it from what I heard. The story of how Lord Souffley made a bet he'd be at Halifax in time for the races, and how he 'carried on' by Jove! and finally thumped the *Cowslip* ashore; the narrative of Jones's stupid quarrel with Smith; odd facts about Admiral Manton's marriage, &c. Also how continually we hear strange stories about what our unpopular shipmates did, long since, on other stations! I remember that one of the lieutenants of the *Cracker*, told all sorts of stories about his commander at a military mess. The commander was going to call him out, but somehow did not. The youngster soon gets used to this element, and begins to think it fine to do his share of the scandal. Meanwhile, there's a 'sweet little'—not cherub—demon—that 'sits up aloft,' and looks after you. The demon of *ennui*. Commend me to *ennui*, in a big ship, on a station where there's nothing to do! Our nearest approach to an adventure was when we were sent on shore for the beef; we had laughter for weeks at poor Fitz-Grumphy from Ireland, who reported himself to the commander. 'Come on board, sir, in the mutton boat!' Poor Fitz! Woe to the youngster who was susceptible to 'chaff!' That gallant fellow, a daring man either in bad weather, or 'across country,' would abso-

lutely be 'chaffed' into tears of rage. There was plenty of 'bullying,' in the old *Vindicator*. There was McMidden, a sulky Scotch bully: Luckless, a seedy dandy, the upper-deck mate, a conceited, suspicious bully—as many varieties of *genus* bully, as there are of the *genus* shark. When I first began to pass from *ennui* into disgust, was when (still a small youngster) I was assaulted by a Devonport man, named Lugg. I was bitterly annoyed then; but what are my reflections, now, when I think that a man named Lugg should have laid his hands on one who quarters the Bloody Heart!

"I will venture to make one more general remark: and that shall be, to point out the vital difference between the service of to-day and the service of the old time. In the old time, to each who served, the service was all-in-all: he was a naval man and nothing else: you could no more take a naval officer for any other than a naval officer, than you could take him for a Turk. Now-a-days we have large and idle squadrons constantly in harbour; our officers are redolent of all the novelties of the day: Jack rides steeple-chases; Tom is the best waltzer in Malta, and a dab at billiards; Harry is a Puseyite; Peter writes in the magazines. The old school grumbles, and moans, and writes general orders, and groans that the service is going to the devil. I should like to know how the deuce the service can escape from the influences of the time? And, unhappily, the old school sticks to the letter of the old days without the spirit of them; it would scarcely be worth while to go back to their customs, when the chances are we should obtain nothing of Benbow but the pigtail! How grand it would be, my dear fellows, if we could get old Benbow back, shorn of his pigtail, dressed like a Christian, and tolerant of claret in a midshipman's mess! So long as we have hearts, the memory of our traditions * must be in them, even if asleep. To awaken the heart, a fine human voice alone is needed; it may be a girl's (here Delormie sighed), it may be a great man's. Perhaps a trumpet would waken our fellows best; or the rolling of drums on the other side of the Channel. I say, Delormie, when the day does come, does anybody but an idiot suppose that you and I will have less pluck than our grandfathers, because we don't wear powder? We want something, my boy, in the way of work. I don't say we want war; but we certainly don't want idleness. What is the result of it? Did not Jack Tibbs break his leg riding a race? Was not our friend Deville ruined at *Monte?* What the deuce came of your flirtation with Ellen Bradshaw? Didn't she wear your heart out, and then marry a man in the Artillery, who, according to you, was as ugly as Hireling, and whom I thought rather a

* The Prince de Joinville dwelt much on the importance of a tradition, in his essay, t'other day, on "L'Escadre de la Mediterranée:"—But you can't *make* a tradition—as well plant a broomstick. Traditions must grow. Neither can good come anyhow of transmitting mistakes, of which his highness (I doubt not unwittingly) must bear the responsibility. For instance, Sir Charles Napier never said that the French squadron *valait mieux* than our own in 1840. A reference to Hansard has satisfied me that his cautionary words have been misrepresented. It is certainly not true that the English squadron *sentait qu'elle ne pouvait rivaliser avec* the French one, either. Proof of its inferiority, too, is not forthcoming. The want of intercourse between junior officers seems harshly put; the difference of language was no mean obstacle among the "youngsters."—Ed.

good-looking fellow? Candidly speaking, are we not many of us dunned?

"In fact, my friends, though I am afraid I am boring you, everything depends on what a man takes to, by way of supplying the *vacuum* in his time, and the still drearier *vacuum* in his heart, in the state of things I have been describing. I have known 'seriousness' absorb a fellow under circumstances little favourable to it. We had a midshipman who regulated his time by a diary. Sunday he marked 'devotion and sleep.' I can assure you that when that diary was found lying about, and remorsely read to the mess by Cuckles, our poor friend was driven into a state very unfavourable to either! For myself, I soon hit on a kind of vocation. When I first joined the *Vindicator*, I was fresh from an English school, and of course loathed literature. I even made one of a set who 'chaffed' Timmerhead for reading Byron; and tortured poor Taster, who was suspected of scribbling verses. Goth that I was! When I first read Byron myself, I got perfectly intoxicated with him. To my other Maltese creditors I now added a bookseller. Before six months I was a semi-infatuated *bel-esprit*. I was a critic and a wag. From that moment I date my naval misfortunes. Had I been an ass, there would have been no harm done; unfortunately I had, and still have, some degree of intellect. I soon had enemies by the score. I went on for awhile in ignorance of this, with the harmless wish to be considered a clever fellow, as well as a good one. Cuckles awoke me to the state of things, one day, by calling me a 'wasp.' No doubt Cuckles so considered me. Nature had given him, to defend himself, but mean weapons—powerful ones, though, such as she gives to his kind—long ears, namely, and a tail."

"Pause for a moment," said Delormie; "John is coming to replenish the jugs."

CHAPTER II.

"The *Vindicator* was a little bit of a 'family ship'—though, of course, nothing to the *Bloater*, in which I afterwards served with Forbessy, there. The captain and commander were related, and so it happened that they carried their private squabbles into matters of service. Somehow, the chaplain got mixed up with the disputes; and one Sunday he preached a sermon which, it seems, was levelled at his superior officer. I did not see the allusion myself: in fact I was not listening; few who could help it ever attended church; and 'oldsters' who dared, stopped below and drank bottled-beer, keeping their consciences quiet by sending the youngsters. Old Mulligrub left the main-deck after service [they stopped the bell till seven-bells, which they struck, as a hint to Blackman to 'cut it short'], and sent the chaplain a ferocious order to preach 'according to the Articles of War.' For my part, I never could understand how you could derive

instructions from them on such matters; but what fun it created below when the news came! Everybody was laughing and commenting on the story; somehow, Cuckles got wind that I had written a song about it. Cuckles was always buzzing about the commander's ears; and I soon found that the commander had *an eye* upon me. When work was going on, he was always snarling at my heels, and speaking reproachfully to me before the men. The devil himself cannot stand this kind of thing—which yet is a constant practice in the service now. You have, somehow, created a dislike in a man's mind—*how*, of course, is never to be learned; forthwith he has *his eye* (as they say) upon you. He doubles your work—tortures you about your watch and quarter-bills, and your still more terrible log—stops your leave on the smallest pretext, and, what is worst of all, keeps up a perpetual irritation at your heels, like the barking of a cur.

"There is no knowing what some people will consider a subject for ridicule. My harmless attachment to the *belles-lettres* seemed a capital joke to one set, and made me hated by another. It seemed an awful sarcasm, I remember, to Commander Modell (who really had some talent) to say, 'Sir, you consider yourself too clever for your profession!' The truth was, Modell set up for a book-man himself; but never soared beyond an occasional letter in a nautical weekly, signed 'Shrapnell,' or 'Nauticus,' and trying to persuade the Admiralty to give two epaulettes to lieutenants, or to give up serving out hexagonal biscuits, and return to round ones. I was sick of the *Vindicator!* I was glad when she was ordered home! And what I disliked was also, that I got bullied in this way, though I never neglected the profession; to this hour I can still go through their dreary gunnery exercise, and though I die lord chancellor or a bishop, I shall never get their 'ready, oh! ready,' &c., out of my ears, or forget what distinctive process attaches to the hauling-out and passing of the fourth reef-earing. Gad! I dream sometimes that I'm in the *Orson* again, and either running aground or thumping into another vessel, or missing stays!"

"By Jove!" struck in Hughley, "You know my father's an admiral, and we hear the old gentleman, who hasn't been afloat for twenty years, roaring out about 'bow-lines,' and other barbarisms, in his sleep."

"Well; when the *Vindicator* got her orders, I went into the *Python*, 16, one of those dirty little brigs which you see sometimes in the Mediterranean, and which turn up among the highly-polished, idle leviathans of Malta harbour, with the air of *parvenus* completely. Bless you, we had a pretty lot of *them* at that time! There was the *Brimstone*, whose captain was a known toper; once or twice that vessel gave rise to courts-martial of the most shameful character—inquiries into brutal and untrue accusations of an unmentionable kind, which argued gross want of discipline; but I am becoming too serious. Presto! Fancy me off to the *Python* in the cutter, chest and all, with my certificate in my pocket, and landed on the little deck—buff-coloured—bulwarks round—a general air of dirt and finery. I was received by the first lieutenant, a spindle-shanked, red-faced man, with a glass screwed into

his eye—really and truly baboonish in expression. He paused in the midst of a volley of slangy abuse; for he had taken advantage of the commander's absence to drill the crew, and keep them loosing and furling sails. 'Fore-yard!—there's a tinker on the fore-yard, and a cobbler alongside of him! Light out there, you grass-combing bugaboos!' Pshaw! this claret is hardly good enough to wash that fellow's language from one's mouth! He hopped about: fretted to and fro, making the air redolent of blackguardism. I stood in mute astonishment.

"'Oh, you're Mr. Adair, from the *Vindicator*, are you, eh?' [I modestly gave him to understand that I was that officer] 'Hem, very well.' (There was something in his look which convinced me that I would never be a favourite of his; and so it proved.)

"But, first of all, let us go down into the berth. I never saw such a hole. The clerk, who was the senior of the mess and caterer, was constantly drunk. The mess were few in number; good fellows, two of them, who are *not* now in the navy—a third was singing, when I had first the honour to make his acquaintance, a song concerning one 'Father Ball;' if I rightly remember. I have never yet, in my literary researches, found anything that would throw much light on the origin or fortunes of Father Ball; but the lyric concerning him ran somewhat thus :—

Old Father Ball
  Came from the Holy Land;
All the way he came,
  With his holystones and sand.

(A curious cargo for Father B., whom one takes, from the first clause, to have come back from some crusade;) but in the next stanza, we find what a strange use he put them to—

He holystoned his father,
  He holystoned his mother,
He holystoned his sister,
  And holystoned his brother!

(Extraordinary conduct this:) but listen—

Yet, not content with that,
  Yet, not content with that,
He holystoned the servant-maid,
  And dumb-scraped the cat!

—Which is all that I remember, at present, of the proceedings of Father Ball, though they seemed to have a perennial charm for my new messmate, Treloon. He was sitting in his shirt-sleeves, drinking cold tea, at noon, and when I introduced myself as 'come to join' he looked at me with astonishment, mingled with compassion. Everybody in the *Python* wondered that anybody should join the *Python*. The sergeant of marines was a spy on the berth proceedings, who carried everything to the abovementioned officer with the baboonish expression. This individual, I soon found, was inclined to persecute the midshipmen whenever he could get a chance—and when can a first-lieutenant *not* get a chance? You remember him, surely, Fontenoy [Adair turned to that gentleman, who nodded]. His father held some semi-gaoler

appointment in a convict-ship, and he was brought up on board—riding a cock-horse among thieves, and carried on the back of felons! A pretty fellow to command gentlemen; but what a fellow to be able to insult them!

"You can guess how matters went on in the *Python*. Some kind friend in the *Vindicator*, I fancy, hinted to him of the simious aspect, that he had better keep *his eye* (another eye!) on Mr. Maxwell Adair. Here, now, we may dwell on a delight of the service. You carry a prejudice about with you from ship to ship; when a man has done his worst with you in his own, he gets you transferred to another vessel,—and there the ill-feeling accumulates at interest. So matters progressed with me. Our simious friend soon perceived that I was not one of his sort; I am certain that he hated me for being a reading man to begin with (he was himself more ignorant than a hound), and that he had a certain misgiving that I held him in profound contempt. Add to this, that the commander showed me (unfortunately for me, in that respect) some considerable kindness: and as the commander was intensely disliked, by both him of the simious, &c., and the second-lieutenant, Bulbons:—here was another charming chance for me! I had not been a month in that brig, before began as organised a system of the regular old bullying, as ever was practised afloat. We know—everybody knows—that nothing is more common in these times, than for such a system to be formed and exercised with the direct object of ruining the victim's professional prospects.

I was an easy prey. I am not one of those tough-hided fellows who can bear much in this line. To turn the other cheek, when the first has had an ape's unholy paw laid roughly on it, is contrary to my instincts and to my principles. Besides, I am somewhat easily bored, and my contempt for stupidity when it allies itself with spite, is overwhelming and unbounded. I was young, too. My heart and fancy were fed continually with the history of great men, and the sayings of bright writers, and, in the places we cruised to, with the scenes of splendid achievements. Fancy, then, what mood I was in to bear being incessantly insulted in public and private—harassed by annoying punishments, and fettered by spiteful restrictions. I did what our caninosimious hero wished to provoke me to do; I forgot that he was a first-lieutenant, and only remembered that he was a blackguard, and enabled him to pin me for *insubordination*. This, we know, may mean anything; hence the grand advantage of the accusation.

"Destiny next sent me from the *Python* to the *Caitiff*, where, of course, I began my career under delightful auspices. My conduct was to be 'reported on' there. Scarcely had I reached the deck, when I was harangued by little Kraggles, M.P. who saw in the case a chance for one of those speeches which the House of Commons escaped by his absence; Kraggles had but one idea in his head—the idea of his own importance; and that idea rattled there, in the void region, like a pea in a drum! He was a little man, with everything about him in proportion—a mind like a doll's house, all tinily and neatly furnished with a little reason, a little fancy, a little ambition—all the little things needful to a mind on the doll's scale! *He* left

soon; and poor old Mopes succeeded; Mopes and I would have gone on well enough, but about this time Pappleton, of the *Bloater*, wanted a midshipman, and I was sent to that famous 'family ship,' where I had soon the opportunity of making the acquaintance of our friend Forbessy.

"Funny old vessel! Those were amusing times, too, eh! my Forbessy of Forbessy.* How gloriously Pappleton did use the service to be sure, for the convenience of Mrs. P.! His fault was, that he would be so confoundedly paternal: he wanted to write to my father about my state of mind. He judged you by what Mrs. Pappleton thought of you. The whole thing was full of comedy. Mules ironing his collar; Filbert saying grace over a boiled fowl that ought to have gone to the sick under his charge. Mrs. Pappleton's petticoats hanging in the mizen-rigging to dry; Hackles getting up Scripture History for the first time at forty, to teach White and Black Pappleton; these were too good to be borne without inextinguishable laughter. I say it, and will maintain it, Pappleton's waddle on the poop was too much for the muscles of fallible men! My eye twinkled at the sight of that old gentleman! His want of seamanship was notorious, and it seemed to run in his family, for I remember H—— telling us at dinner in the *Ceylon*, — one of those pleasant dinners which came before that eccentric young gentleman's departure for England—that there were three Pappletons commanders, and that they could not put a ship about among them. My service with Pappleton did not last long; he was nephew or something to the commander-in-chief, Sir Booby Booing, and in that off-hand, easy way, which is so formal and so fair, dropped to him in conversation, that Mr. Adair was a—hem—a troublesome youth, and had better be put under Ricks in the *Preposterous*. Worse and worse! Here was I, with no charge against me, handed over to Ricks to try his hand on. His vessel carried the flag of the admiral; his violent temper was perhaps, on the whole, worse than Pappleton's querulous snarling, or the *Simia's* fretful impudence. I thought it best to try some other station altogether, one where there was something to do. I made a formal application to be permitted to go to England, and for this purpose was discharged to the *Kabob*, in Dockyard Creek, to wait a passage. The *Kabob* was a vessel in ordinary, commanded by Lieutenant John Lumper — Fontenoy knows him! — son of Sir John Lumper, the second in command.

"I am now coming to the crisis. I have been somewhat prolix, I fear (Delormie bowed deprecatingly), but it was necessary to lead us to the great event. I wished to show you, by a sketch here and there, what kind of place I actually found the service. But I particularised once or twice, for this reason: it is my belief, that what was presently achieved by Lumper *fils* (*patre stulto*, *filius stultior*), who brought me to trial, was part and parcel of the personal spite of Cuckles, the *Simious*, poor Kraggles, Pappleton, and Ricks, all following each other, with ears and tail erect, and kicking at me, in succession! I say, this may be so; Lumper, I am persuaded, thought it devolved on him to

* They were. He was a cheerful and brilliant soul, but the treatment he speaks of had begun to make him reckless.—*Note in the handwriting of Mr. Forbessy.*

strike a finishing blow, and by finally *keeping his eye* on Mr. Adair, to get for himself no end of laurels:—and plenty, too, he needed, if he wished, in crowning himself, to hide his ears! I joined the *Kabob* to wait a passage to England. Lieutenant John Lumper came on board in the mornings, usually, and saw that the decks were clean, and little jobs of the sort; the command devolved, meanwhile (for, except for about an hour, this active gentleman was on shore), on Gobb, the gunner, a common plebeian of the vessel. Lumper must have resolved early, I fancy, on his tactics, and impregnated Gobb with his spirit, for Gobb was ever uncivil. Lumper began soon: he *stopped my leave*, though there was no charge against me, and I had been discharged to the *Kabob* at my own request. There was no duty to do; I spent most of my time in reading; and as there were two or three other fellows waiting passages, I was contented enough. Let us see how Lumper went to work to get up a court-martial. Ingenuity it would be perhaps too much to attribute to one whose face showed that he was dull, as his talk did that he was uneducated, and his walk that he was vulgar. But some cunning I *do* attribute to Lumper; I declare boldly that he had some brains, and that (aided by Gobb, who, for aught I know, was his relation), he was successful enough.

"The little mess which we formed derived their supplies from a Maltese steward, who made a good profit out of the business. Unfortunately, one of the mess got in his debt to a degree he did not like, so off he goes to Lumper with a complaint. A complaint! Lumper rubs his hands and chuckles. 'The name?' Steward answers. Lumpus's jaw falls (such a jaw!) for the name is *not* Mr. Adair's. What is to be done? That mighty intellect goes to work. He will just ask, and find out all about Mr. Adair's pecuniary relations, which is capital fun for a *gentleman*.

"'Does *Mr. Adair* not owe anything?'

"The poor Maltese is before his commander; rather likes Mr. Adair, who has paid him liberally, and who is a good customer: but must answer. Answers 'Yes;' for there is a small balance, the time for which has not come, and of which the poor Maltese never dreamed of complaining. To work goes Lumper, and, presto! he has *Charge first* ready.

"1. '*For* REFUSING *to pay the ward-room messman for articles provided by him.*'

"So far so good. Lumper will now haul in Adair and a friend or two. . . . But there must be more charges yet. Gobb knows perfectly the wishes of Lumper; and considers your humble servant a 'haristocrat,' whose 'wheel' he would like to put a 'spoke in.' (In truth, I never encouraged Gobb to intimacy; the notion would have been absurd; I left him to guzzle among his own class.) 'Bide,' thinks Gobb, as a great Scotch family says.

"The Maltese steward was in the habit of going on shore at night to his connubial couch like a sensible fellow. Usually his last office was to come and say, 'Want anytink, Mister Adair, fore I go ashore?' If I were then inclined for wine, I was in the habit of ordering it; and night found me smoking a cigar over a glass of modest Marsala and water, with Swift, or oftener a Tauchnitz classic, for my companion,

My messmates were on shore enjoying themselves; I was a prisoner. One night as it chanced, our Maltese missed me; got no orders; and on board come my messmates and find a quantity of wine which is found insufficient. We had been very merry: news had been spread that there was going to be a vessel to England soon. The genial Ropy had sung a song, little Francis danced the polka up and down the room; Lobb and I were laughing. In a moment it occurred to us, that we would see what wine the steward had on board, and we took the key for the purpose; the wine was there for our consumption, and what more reasonable than to arrange with him in the morning? We went outside to where the cabin was; one held a light, the other applied the key, and there was a great deal of laughing,—when suddenly Gobb (whose rum had not had its usual soporific effect) came running out of his cabin in his shirt-tails.

"Gobb had made a hit! for, next morning, when he reported this, he enabled Lumper to concoct—*Charge second.*

"2nd. '*For* RIOTING *in the ward-room on the night of the — inst., and attempting to break open the door of the mess-steward's cabin, where a quantity of wine and spirits were kept.*'

"Never did a certain quadruped pitch on a crop of thistles with greater glee than that which now filled the soul of Lumper. Mark the air of awfulness with which he invested the proceedings of that night till they breathed burglary and violence! Lumper was happy, and Lobb very foolishly gave him matter for a third charge by coming on board drunk—provoking me into a scuffle, and forcing me to lay over his back a little whip he was carrying; which was stretched into,—

"3rd. '*That Mr. Maxwell Adair did violently beat Mr. Peter Lobb on the evening of the —th instant.*'

"I am convinced it is the charm which this formal and big style of doing business has for weak intellects, that causes half the courts-martial now held. It elevates the prosecutor into so much consequence for the time. Nobody, for instance, could be more unimportant than Lieutenant John Lumper in ordinary life; but Lieutenant John Lumper going on board in full uniform, as a 'prosecutor,' in a cocked-hat, was rather a formidable object. He looked two inches higher, and not *much* stupider, perched behind the chair of the president—*his father*, who, of course, was just the man to judge equitably of a case brought forward by his son and heir.

"The day was fixed for the great event, and no sooner had this been determined on, than Ropy and I, and our fellow-prisoners, were put under charge of a sentry, who, with bayonet in fist, guarded us, and followed us, if ever we had occasion to move about. For, of course (which you will to see to be amusing), all courts-martial are equally solemn; and a midshipman tried for kicking the captain's dog would be put through just as many awful forms as if he had kicked the captain himself. There is an inexhaustible delight to pompous and feeble intellects in ceremonial; and here is an affair full of ceremonial.

"'Boom' went a gun from the admiral's vessel at 8 a.m.; up flew the Union to the peak.

" 'Thank God, we've cost them fourpence for powder!' said Ropy, as the gun was heard.

" 'Prisoners in the boat,' soon followed, and off we went, under charge of our keeper, who never used his bayonet I was glad to observe, and who was an object of comic wonder to me, from the way in which he kept his countenance. Meanwhile, just fancy the scene on board the *Preposterous!* A guard of marines, Sumph commanding, full-dressed everywhere, side piped—Sir John Lumper comes on board—off cocked-hats, 'guards present arms!' clash go the muskets, rub-a-dub-dub go the drums, and enter Sir John Lumper! All very imposing as far as the soldiers, cocked-hats, and noise go, and nothing unimpressive—*except the men.* By and by, as civilization proceeds, I make no doubt that courts-martial will be held by the cocked-hats only! and I throw out the suggestion, in this economical age, as likely to save expense. More piping and bowing, more cocked-hats and swords, and we have Captain Ricks of the *Preposterous*, Sir Looby Gooby of the *Incapable*, Captain Rooster Goose, and the whole quarter-deck blazing with gold lace, and awful with cocked-hats. Myself and fellow prisoners are marched off into a main-deck cabin. I suppose there is some moral want in my composition; but I was a great deal less awed by all this, though I was only a youth of eighteen, than anybody might expect, and just as alive to the absurd and ludicrous pomposity of the affair, as I am at this moment.

" 'The court open,' is the cry next; the preliminary swearing is gone through in no time, and the judge-advocate, on whom the writing (and so, luckily, the spelling) devolves, assumes his pen. I, likewise, bring out my note-book, being determined that posterity shall not lose the business from any neglect of mine.

" *Ricks, Esq.*—'Mr. Adair, would you like a chair and table?'

" *Myself.*—'If you please, Captain Ricks.'

"I am accommodated accordingly. For you are never so well treated as when you are going to be smashed. Sir John Lumper (who feels that there is no use in *making a toil of pleasure*) takes snuff, and looks round him in a leisurely way.

" Lieutenant Lumper, the prosecutor, now begins business. He is perched behind the president's chair, and has a good deal the aspect of a waiter. On the whole, however, he is decidedly frightened at his own importance, and, being closely buttoned up, his countenance changes from white to red with a good deal of facility.

" The first witness is our Maltese steward, who presently is handed over to me to be cross-examined. I at once elicit from him, with the assistance of a question put by the junior member of the court, Sir F. N—— (the only one who showed any inclination that I should have a fair chance), that he has no fault whatever to find with my conduct to him in money matters. Next, I draw out that he had been *asked* about the matter—had not voluntarily complained; which makes Mr. John Lumper look a little more foolish than usual. The Maltese (whose agitation has been melancholy) withdraws.

" Gobb, the gunner, deposes to some noise in the ward-room. (This,

you observe, is the rioting.) He deposes to a key being put to a door. (This is the breaking-open.) He is asked his 'general opinion' about our character and conduct; for John Lumper feels he has us there, if his friend Gobb be allowed to expatiate on his 'general opinion.' Gobb mutters something about our 'lying in bed in the morning,' and then affirms that he has but a bad opinion of us altogether. Fancy asking a potboy's opinion of the character of one of the strangers at his hotel, and you have a notion of the value of Gobb's one.

"The trial thus drags its slow length along—every question and answer being repeated and written down. The day wears through. Members begin to want their dinners, and feel that the sooner the prisoners are made an end of the better. During a slight adjournment at noon, for purposes of sherry and biscuits, the judge-advocate had suggested to us, in the politest manner, that we should abandon any idea of defence, throw ourselves on the mercy of the court, and be devoured with humility.

"Ten minutes for defence was offered us in the evening, but I took the liberty of requesting an adjournment, which was granted. So the court broke up *pro tem.*, and everybody went to dinner:—Ricks, no doubt, thinking it 'a bore' that we could not be settled off-hand. Not that I fancy he felt the least misgiving as to what the result would be. No no! matters have improved since the court-martial in 1841 (I think that was the date), which *acquitted* a midshipman for refusing to go aloft for punishment. 'D—n it,' said the commander of the *Harold*, when he heard of that decision; 'I did not think old Sir D—— D—— would have let a midshipman slip through his fingers!' Beautiful and venerable old man!

"You would have laughed if you had seen us that evening composing our defences: the abject state of Lobb, who could not get on at all, was wonderful to behold. Ropy and I wrote away with extreme glee and turned in happy, when we had written our lucubrations fairly out. A midshipman make a defence! such a thing is rarely heard of in the profession, but I resolved not to let such gentlemen as Lumper and Co., triumph over me without showing fight. I was not going to stand frozen with terror by all the cocked-hats that ever were made by an army-tailor. I had myself to assert,—my personal qualities to maintain against the paltry combinations which were now triumphing, or thinking they triumphed; I had a blush to bring into the cheek of the churl who stood behind the president's chair. It was with a feeling of pride, that when Ropy had concluded, and a voice said—'Mr. Adair,' that I stood before those solemn and awful gentlemen, amidst the dead silence, and the crowds of spectators within the ropes on each side of the cabin, and began in measured language the address which I had prepared. I hope it is not presumptuous in me to say that I felt in myself a something which elevated me beyond *those* judges and *that* hour. [Mr. Adair raised the claret to his lips.] Not fear stirred my heart, but a feeling of undeveloped force which sustained me in the height of the moment, and seemed the presage of distant times, when this poor pageant should be forgotten, and live even in my memory only as a subject of ridicule and scorn.

"Now, mark my first point. I objected *in limine* to the trial altogether; the articles of war provide, I urged, for persons on 'active service and full pay.' I could not be so described while in the *Ceylon* waiting a passage. I next urged an informality in the assembling of the court, and then addressed myself to the charges.

"The defence was not, I congratulate Lumper and Co., such as it would be, had I to make it *now*. I flatter myself that I should have driven some three or four of *that* class of gentlemen into the retired list, or the obscurity of their family positions, had it occurred last week! It was the hasty production of a youngster, under every disadvantage. But it had the honour to startle the court, and—but I will tell you more in a minute. I did make Lumper blush when I mentioned his 'private inquiries;' I saw him wince. I argued and ridiculed the charges away in turns. I extinguished Gobb, who, after all, poor fellow, was the most harmless man concerned, and the most helpless. By Jove, I was an audacious youngster! When the court was cleared to consult, nobody doubted the result. To be charged with such terrible offences was bad enough, for a midshipman; to have proved them false and ridiculous, was, of course, inevitable condemnation!

"There we were, for a mortally long period in suspense, and under the custody of our sentry friend, who was still harmless. At last the cabin bell sounded; a pause; doubt, wonder—'Court open,' and in we go! Fancy yourself, my dear Delormie, once more in the close and crowded cabin—the whole interest of the trial concentrated into a moment; the members in solemn silence, while the formal voice of the judge-advocate begins the sentence.

"It is elaborately arranged, to keep you on tenter-hooks. 'At a court-martial held on board Her Majesty's ship *Preposterous*, so-and-so commanding, by order of Sir Booby Booing, Knight-Commander of the Tub, Grey Goose of Hanover, &c. &c.,' so the words roll on; anxious seconds run away: at last comes—'*do therefore adjudge the said Mr. Maxwell Adair to be dismissed from Her Majesty's service.*' Then, all is over. The worst is past; and there is a great calling away of boats, and piping; and—I emerged into the beautiful air of the Mediterranean summer, as calm and cheerful as I ever was in my life! Thanks to my 'notes,' the report of the trial went abroad, and the charges and sentence excited the ridicule of the whole profession in both hemispheres, and were laughed at from the North Sea to the Indian Ocean."

"By Jove!" Delormie broke in, as Adair came to a pause. 'And you lost your profession on charges like these?"

Adair.—"They found the first one false, too, as regarded me. But now listen to the cream of the whole:

"On my arrival in England, the crown lawyer declared that my first objection had been fatal; and I received a notice from the Admiralty that the trial was illegal, and the sentence null and void."

Delormie.—"Ah! and of course you were all right again; and they expressed a wish to compensate for the annoyance?"

Adair.—"My dear Delormie, I am afraid you are but little acquainted with naval matters! May I ring for coffee?"

MR. ADAIR'S NARRATIVE.

Delormie and the other fellows were so much interested by the story Maxwell Adair told us about his Court-Martial, that Delormie made a resolution to invite—like the hospitable fellow he is—the whole party to a Greenwich dinner. Nobody made any objection to the proposal. Delormie commissioned me (as he was going out of town for a day or two to a relative in the country) to bring the men together on the proper day. The proper day came, and we embarked in a steamer for the scene of operations. Not a man was missing! Paldenbury threw his aunt overboard (be not alarmed, oh reader!—I don't mean that he precipitated that respectable lady from the steamer *Bridegroom*, but only that he sent an excuse instead of going to a dinner of hers). Wrighly had risen before noon, and had been breakfasting with Paldenbury according to an agreement made the night before at the *Cas*— [*this word is illegible*]. Another friend or two had come from Hatchett's, and told us a queer adventure of a naval man we knew, who had recently obfuscated himself with extreme port there, and had woke up to full consciousness—at Exeter. How the deuce he got there, he declared himself unable to tell. He had been raving about somebody at Plymouth for the last bottle or two, it seems; and so must have set off by instinct, got into a Great Western carriage somehow, and gradually come round during a prolonged snooze in the train. He found his first-class ticket in his pocket, and all his money safe; and looked on himself as an individual specially favoured by Providence. With this harmless chat we beguiled the way, as the steamer thumped along past the dreary, old, deserted warehouses of the West Indian Docks (which now serve as Nigger Monuments), past many a crowd of masts and funnels—onwards, along the smoky shores of the great river of trade, to where the green and wooded Greenwich, with its white houses, dawns freshly on your sight. It is an advantage one attains by being knocked about, away from England, that jolly old London never loses its romantic side for you. Its overflowing life and its august history are fresh in their effect on the imagination. I don't say that if I were always in London I should not lose somewhat of the enjoyment of this very river by use—particularly if I were often pestered by the sight of young cockneys, with bad cigars, and noisy, showy manners; some of whom, for instance, were in the steamer with us this very day I am writing about. As it is, give me, when on a flying visit in summer—give me, I say, a cruise from Greenwich up to Richmond on a summer day with a fresh breeze. It is a pleasant way of reading English history—a grand succession of illuminated pages of history, more lovely than Hume's. Not but that Hume's history is a greater work than they are inclined to believe at Manchester, only it is pleasanter to read, "Progress of Commerce—Civilization," written in

the Hospital and up by the Docks; then, "Growth of the Constitution" in the antique and ornate towers of the Houses of Parliament; recognising at last, in the sweet, pure water, and gorgeous sylvan wealth above Richmond, the symbols of the natural qualities of the nation, from which, as their origin, came the capabilities worked into such results farther down! This disposition to be alive to the river's glories made me enjoy our voyage vividly; and we landed at Greenwich pier in a mood of boyish exultation only to be compared to that with which a batch of bran-new youngsters makes descent the first on the sunny old pavement of Valetta. Everything was ready for the party of the hospitable Delormie. In a deliciously-airy apartment looking out on the river, did the hospitable table glitter and gleam. From the water-souchée and whitebait, the lively hock and seltzer-water, and the impetuous champagne, to the calm time of strawberries and claret—ah, that was an hour! Paldenbury (now in the *Lily*) has since confessed to me that he has soothed the slow torture of many a middle watch on the coast by the memory of that hour. I believe him. It passed merrily away like a prosperous life, and the deep calm of the claret period succeeded to it, like a venerated age. There was a silence for a little—that most tranquil silence, when everybody takes his first sip of claret, and forgets his cares, and forgives his enemies.

Presently, Delormie, who had been whispering to Maxwell Adair (who occupied the seat on his right), looked round with a gay air, and delivered himself of the following,—"My friend Adair has kindly consented (as the playbills say) to give us a further instalment of his autobiography. [Applause.] We are to have the sequel to the Court-Martial. [Sensation.] Adair, my boy, our last glimpse of you was when you were leaving the *Preposterous*, after the SENTENCE had been delivered. Begin, my infant."

Every eye was here turned on our eccentric friend, who, moistening his whistle, broke into a fine flow of rhetoric, *more suo*, immediately. Adair *loquitur*:

"Really, I take this curiosity about my adventures as a great compliment. I should say that you were too flattering, only that the interest of my yarn depends entirely upon its being a narrative of facts. After all, the hackneyed old saying of Byron's, about truth being stranger than fiction, *is* a perfectly just one. All decent fiction is based upon truth, and all good description is derived from the study of nature. Think you that any great satirist, for instance, ever *invented* his materials? Not he. The eye for them was his own, of course; they themselves were the creation of Nature, the mighty mother. Depend on it, there were realities of Roman life which even Juvenal never got an adequate grasp of, noble as is the work which by eye and heart he did manage to achieve. Did I, my dear Delormie, create the Lumpers and Hirelings; the Rickses and little Kraggles? Not a bit of it: I only studied them—as Cuvier, in studying the genus *simia*, went to work scientifically, and dissected an ape. Some men have deeper vision than others; some eyes see what other eyes are blind to; but *all* eyes alike must learn their functions from, and employ their powers on, the material which the world outside gives them to deal with.

I most sincerely believe that for the greatest story ever written, ever studied by mankind, we owe deeper gratitude to the facts which taught the author, than to the author himself. Cervantes was a great man, but we must not, in our reverence for him, forget the beauty of the old Spanish traditions, or the richness of the actual Spanish life. All which, oh pleasant Delormie! is to illustrate my statement, that my narrative must owe and shall owe its interest, if any, to the fact that every tint of colour in it is copied from the actual colours which it has pleased Eternal Destiny to weave as threads into the strange web of the life of Maxwell Adair."

Our friend rattled off this sentence with such speed that a moistener was necessary. Having refreshed, he resumed—

"It is a consoling fact, that if we had no troubles to contend with, we should remain very ignorant fellows. The lamp of one's life, like Aladdin's must get *rubbed* before the genii will come. Or, like amber (to use another figure), you must get a good *rubbing* before the secret power in you is awakened, and things having an affinity to you fly to your attraction. Many godlike bunches of grapes had a terrible squeezing before they produced the very pleasant product of the South which we are now consuming. Let us be thankful for the 'rows' of our youth. Let us even go further; and say, in the words of the greatest writer of the last age, translated by the greatest writer of this (Goethe, translated by Carlyle), namely:—

> Who never ate his bread in sorrow,
> Who never spent the darksome hours
> Weeping and watching for the morrow—
> He knows you not, you Heavenly Powers!

"This I believe to be perfectly true. Then, any adventure out of the beaten track, in this age of steam-machinery, patent biscuits, ten-pound-house governors of mankind, &c., &c., is a decidedly beneficial thing. Depend upon it, life is too comfortable generally; most fellows are too well off and spoilt by it, like a man who cannot see for fat. Accordingly we find all the aspiring spirits rushing away and seeking discipline. The Duke of Wellington, at the height of fortune, imposes on himself a regimen of life, moral and physical, which half the younger sons in the peerage would consider intolerably severe. To escape the hell of *ennui*, men fly to the backwoods, to the Polar Sea, to Indian hunting, to Australia. I am unaffectedly thankful for my share of tribulations, and this my friends Ricks, Pappleton, Kraggles, and Lumper, ought to be glad to hear. Like an invalid who has recovered his strength by being well jolted on the back of a donkey, I owe a certain gratitude to the animals whose shaking of my bones has helped to strengthen my constitution. Waiving the curious moral question, as to *what* degree of gratitude I ought to feel, however, let me sketch the proceedings which followed after the 'sentence.'

"It is in these great crises that you feel your own natural capabilities. I am a great believer in the mystic force—the demoniac something in the wondrous animal, man, which lies deep, waiting for occasion. I believe that being executed publicly would not be found

so terrible in fact as it seems in imagination. One little phrase had altered the whole position and prospects in life of old Ropy, poor Lobb and myself. One little phrase, agreed on by Ricks & Co., and put into black and white in a matter-of-fact style by the Judge-Advocate (who had so kindly hinted that we should make no defences, but throw ourselves on the 'mercy' (!) of the Court), had changed every human relation of ours. Such an event is generally a 'smasher' for a man for life. In any case it is a very serious business. 'What the devil will your FRIENDS say?'—is one of your first thoughts. 'How about Mrs. Grundy's views of the business?' I believe that, if the truth were known, those people who are most 'afflicted' would be found to be secretly grateful to you for giving them such a capital theme to moralize on. Your kinsman Tartuff Timberhead, is deeply wounded: and seems to find a strange pleasure in scratching his sore, exhibiting it, and begging a plaster for it. He sympathizes with your mamma; so much so, that he writes twice a week to say so; and throws her into tears, periodically, for some time. But he is so very edifying that his reputation goes up in the whole neighbourhood, and he nets a snug little whack of repute out of your misfortunes. Your cousin Tom, in the Twentieth Peppers, remarks publicly that the family has not met with such a misfortune since the Conquest; and that he fears you are going to turn out another copy of that Timberhead who got into such d—d scrapes during Gustavus Adolphus's wars. Both which remarks, delivered with melancholy seriousness, throw a halo of aristocratic interest round Tom, and induce people to make him happy by asking the particulars about that last-mentioned Timberhead, which he proceeds to give them at great length. But the people who make most hubbub about the matter are perhaps those who are the least connected with you, and whose business it by no manner of means is to open their mouths on the subject. The Grundys, the Poynders, the Dollops, &c., &c., whom your family meet ceremoniously twice a year—Lord! how they are interested in it! They read the defence, and draw a pointed comparison between *your* naval career and that of the lamented Benbow. . . . . All this, you see, my friends, is but a part of the matter for reflection which rushes into a man's (or boy's) mind, when he marches out as a T. G., or travelling gentleman, from the cabin which he entered as an officer. Pipe went the side—Rooster Goose sailed along, resplendent in cocked hat and gold lace—boats whizzed about the harbour—Lumper received the congratulations of congenial friends—and away went we to the *Kabob* again. Yet, as I said before, I was supported by a strange sense of cheerfulness and gaiety—by a buoyancy which kept me active, alive, and even joyous; the world lay all before me; and I felt the same wild, turbulent longing to plunge into it, which, six years before, I had felt to seek and learn the ways of the immeasuable and mysterious sea.

"To this day I remember with vividness how I spent an hour or two in the *sanctum* of the editor of the *Malta* ——, and laid before him my notes on the trial, and a copy of my defence. I am not breaking any professional confidence when I say that we had a pleasant chat, and a

bottle of Bordeaux; and, thanks to his kindness, my defence soon appeared,—not to the delight of Lumper, I am happy to believe. I will tell you a characteristic anecdote, *à propos* of the said defence—and which it would be very snobbish in me to suppress in this autobiographic sketch—an anecdote which illustrates human nature. There was a sturdy, solid, English DUN of mine in the island, not over pleased, as you may suppose, at the notion of my departure. I called at his shop; the *Malta* —— was just out that day; and the defence, it seemed, had so pleased our friend that the DUN was forgotten—the MAN predominant. He rushed to shake my hand, and begged me not to disturb myself about the bill, if I could not conveniently pay it. He had read my defence, and felt—&c., &c. May I sink into a Lumper, and talk and look like a clown, if I forget any man's kindness, and if I don't acknowledge the benefit of those troubles and struggles, which teach us how to value the good qualities of our fellow-men!

"Let us now see how friend Lumper and the authorities employed their triumph. I am sorry to say that they did all they could to crush our helplessness, and to embitter our already disagreeable position. Lumper had us routed out of the wardroom (even before the trial, I beg to remark), and did his best to confine us to 'junk,' to deprive us even of knives and forks, and to reduce us to utter discomfort. So much for the chivalry which is always supposed to belong peculiarly to those who follow the profession of the sword. Having concocted his 'charges,' he would, if he could, have deprived us of dinner. Ropy and I, however, kept up our cheerfulness, and ate our junk. Nay, we were better off than Lumper thought. Ropy had made the acquaintance of a pleasant English family, who showered kind civilities upon us; sent off, sometimes, a basket of fresh figs (cool, tender, and green), and even sent a less romantic present—what think you?—a substantial pie. I hold that pie in gracious remembrance to this hour, and trust that its kindly manufacturers are happy and well. So jogged on the days in the *Kabob* while we were waiting for a passage to England. There, moored in Dockyard Creek, struggling with a want of knives and forks, and under the hand of power, Ropy and I spent lively and cheerful evenings, consoling Lobb, who showed an occasional disposition to become maudlin, and whose nerves had been somewhat shaken by a too copious use of the tumbler that summer.

"At last came the time when the *Sprite*, 16, was ordered to Gibraltar; and we were informed that it was our destiny to go so far homewards in her. We knocked about on shore, meanwhile, occasionally; and in so doing had an opportunity of testing our friends. When you are in a scrape, you have at least the satisfaction of knowing *who* your friends are. 'Never mind, old boy!' says honest Jack Brinley, with a squeeze of the fist, encouraging you to keep up your 'pecker' in good English fashion. Similar fellows are hearty, kindly, and unaffected. But—'Hillo there, Toadyley!—How do, Toadyley?'—cries Ropy, wickedly, at Joe Micallef's. Toadyley, who dreads cutting Ropy, and dreads speaking to him, vibrates between two paltry motives for a moment, and compromises with a bow and a sickly smile, and gets away. Who

does not know the Toadyleys? There is generally one in every ship, bullying the youngsters, toadying the commander, and fetching and carrying for the captain's wife. They are something between flunkeys and beadles, and sometimes throw in a dash of the pander to season the mixture, and give it piquancy. Pass on, Toadyley! Here comes a mild, and dandyish, and orthodox young gentleman, very like the late Lord Muddle, and bearing the name of Plantagenet Sprott—the Sprott predominating. He is a youth fast getting on, though they say that the *regular* members of Lord Muddle's family are very angry at a certain settlement which his lordship made on young Sprott. Why, Sprott scarcely salutes us, but fidgets off to keep an engagement as fast as he can!—Sprott, who used to dine so often at our little mess in the *Kabob*, and who thought our Maltese steward there such 'a devil at an omelette!' Other fellows as well as Sprott seem to have forgotten these humble but not disagreeable entertainments.

"The *Sprite*, 16, had orders for sea. We left the *Kabob* gladly enough. I was delighted to emerge from her; feeling, however, towards my persecutors there what I cannot better express than in two lines from Scott's ballad of 'Bonny Dundee' (with the alteration of a word) —

> But tremble, false *Snobs;* though triumphant you be,
> You have not seen the last of my bonnet and me.

"With some such feeling at my heart—and with a heartfelt hope that Lumper might experience the bitter degradation of remaining what he was, and delighting his parent!—I bade the *Kabob* good-bye; and the boat glided away, bearing Lobb, Ropy, and myself, to the *Sprite*. The *Sprite*, a handsome brig, lay in the fair-way, all ready for sea. The moment we joined her, we were informed, that, by special orders from Sir Booby Booing, Knight, Commander of the Tub, Grey-Goose of Hanover, we were not to be allowed to mess with the officers. That is to say, that, having been tried for a breach of military and technical laws, we were to be treated as if we had been found guilty of stealing spoons, cheating at cards, or some offence of that complexion. I have a fair right, I think, to complain of this proceeding, and to pronounce Sir Booby Booing's order unjustly severe. Sir Booby, I believe, 'came in at the hawse-holes;' and though some remarkable officers have entered the service in that way, yet it is equally true, that some who enter by the said 'hawse-holes' retain a little of the *dirt* to which that part of the vessel is liable, sticking to them through life. I know that anything which looks like aristocratic opinion is opposed to the cant and popular babble of the age, and I do not like it the worse on that account. There is a want of generous feeling, of quick sympathy, of delicacy about the *hawseholeans;* and the very fine fellows, the Collingwoods, the Stewarts, or the matchless men of old days, the Herberts, Sidneys, Wottons, remain unapproached by them. This I continue to believe in spite of Cobden and Cuffey: though it by no means follows that I am not to have my laugh at the Lord Fitz-Gubins, Fitz-Billys, and other boobies of connection who get the prizes of the service, and who, also, by the way, are, in spite of their modern importance, *not*

MR. ADAIR AND NAILS.—p. 47.

generally of the best English, old, historic families. But to be done with that point, I may say that I had once an interview with Sir Booby, whom I found a grey, shaky, undignified old man; seedy, slobbery, vain, and harsh. I suppose that he had been fed (he seemed to me advancing to second childhood) with the pap of somebody's malignity, and wished to make us as wretched as possible up to the last. When you have one leg in the grave, to risk the other in kicking a fellow, who is down and helpless at your mercy, is not amiable.

"Accordingly, we were not, we found, to mess in the berth; but were to be billeted off on the warrant-officers. It fell to my lot to share the hospitality of the *Sprite's* carpenter; and as the *Sprite* was nineteen days in going to Gibraltar, I had a good long spell as that worthy man's messmate."

"The devil!" broke in Paldenbury.

Adair took breath, and resumed. "Nineteen days. I made his acquaintance that evening; next day the *Sprite* sailed, and we bade farewell to old Malta — my acquaintance of several years. After all said and done, I have an affectionate recollection of old Malta. In the dreary northern winters here — when the sleet is flying and the wind rampant, and the low November clouds, dirty with London smoke, are raining eternal rain, and the heart of man waxes dull and unbelieving—I love to think of the white island lying set in the blue sea in a region of calm and beautiful air. My spirit walks among the orange-trees, and dreams of the blossoming almond. Yes, Malta helped to awaken my sense of the beautiful, and to kindle my intellectual life. Some day I shall pay a visit to Malta again.—What the devil are you laughing at, Fontenoy?"

Fontenoy, thus recalled to a sense of the proprieties of life, looked graver. "Proceed, my dear Adair," he said, smiling blandly, "*perge*, my boy."

Adair grinned, and playfully shook his fist at him. This by-play (which I do not pretend to understand) over, our friend proceeded.

"Well, here we were at sea, in H.M. brig, *Sprite*. On leaving my hammock in the steerage of a morning, I toddled off to the cabin of my worthy friend, Nails. Ropy, in similar manner proceeded to the apartment of the gunner; Lobb to that of the boatswain. We (that is, each of us with his host) breakfasted — just, as in due time, we dined—sending for our prog per boy to the galley—imbibing ship's tea in the morning; at noon, our beef or pork with biscuit, and our grog in commodious basins of a simple willow pattern. We lounged about, talked or read in the steerage during the day, and regularly after dark Ropy and I took a good smart walk on deck. On the whole it was a very jolly time."

Paldenbury.—"But my dear fellow——"

Adair.—"Upon my word, I'm perfectly in earnest. I still remember with pleasure my *tête-à-tête* dinners with Nails! He sat on the bed generally, and I on a stool in the little cabin. We ate our pork on biscuit, and we drank our grog out of the same basin of willow pattern. My goodness! what would they think if I told the story at a 'swell' party of suburban aristocrats or 'genteel' second raters!"

Fontenoy.—"But come, Adair; we have read all Thackeray's *Snob* papers, and are not slaves to conventional humbug; nevertheless, for a man who swears by Horace and Catullus, and makes a row about violets ——"

Adair.—"I don't say that Nails was a kind of fellow whom you would talk to about Rochefoucauld; I only mean that he was a good, worthy, intelligent man, in whose company nineteen days went pleasantly enough away. We overrate differences of education, manners, and connections, and all the rest of it; and underrate old Mother Nature, the source of them and of us. The man who is what nature made him, and is a *complete* man in his own proper sphere, *he* is not the fellow with whom it is unpleasant to live. It is the confounded pretender—the uneasy being who is *striving* to be something—who is a bore. Besides [here Adair smiled wickedly], my friend Nails was perhaps as well educated, and, in spirit, as well bred, as Lumper or Ricks. I have been at dinners, in London, where the man behind the host's chair looked quite as much like a gentleman as the host himself; and I am sure that Nails was equal in education to *some* men whom we have seen in command of ships. We ought to distinguish between true cultivation—which, beginning in the mind, refines from inwards to outwards — and that sort of refinement which is produced on the outside of a man by contact with polite life, but which, while making him presentable in a drawing-room, leaves him vulgar in heart, mind, and soul. [Mr. Adair sips some claret.]

"However, hang disquisition! I would not have you think that I am only indulging in affectation when I speak of my relishing this extraordinary phase in my career. I say, that any healthy fellow — any genial man worthy to read 'Tom Jones' — would find a social *bouleversement* of this sort not a tithe so disagreeable as they fancy in Tyburnia. The severance of class from class is (as is often said) the peculiar and mischievous symptom of the age. Why don't the middle classes resemble their ancestors, and be a little more brotherly? It is perfectly compatible with the profoundest belief in aristocracy historically, such as I do not hesitate to avow for one!

"So the cruise passed on, varied once or twice by such incidents as a party in the boatswain's cabin, when Lobb and the boatswain gave a 'swarry' (as they call it at Manchester, according to Mr. Disraeli), to Ropy, the gunner, Nails, and your humble servant. The *Sprite* did not go direct to Gibraltar, but paid a short visit to Algiers. In all my Mediterranean cruising I had not been at Algiers before, and I still have a vivid recollection of this glimpse of the town, gleaming white on the sea-shore, with a mole which I believe was constantly being laboured at; and the general air of activity about the place, which, even seen from the ship, gave it a European appearance. Certainly, the French do manage to enliven every spot they occupy, and to set an opera, *cafés*, shops, &c., going briskly. Even one glance at Algiers was sufficient to show you that the sleepy characteristics of an eastern town had been violently broken in upon by 'civilization.' This was in old Louis-Philippe days, which already seem as far off, when one thinks of them, as the days of the previous dynasty. We live in a

'fast' age. I remember, when we gave a dinner to a number of French officers in the *Vindicator*, Commander Modell (bidding everybody 'fill their glasses') said with much dignity, 'Gentlemen, I give you a name respected over all Europe—Louis Philippe!' How quickly our 'respectable classes' forgot the defeated old gentleman whom they had helped to ruin by the absurd flattery and outrageous admiration with which they encouraged him to forget his prudence, and to prepare the way for the (temporary) triumph of editors!

"Friend Ropy, I remember, had a notion that the best thing we could do was to go on shore at Algiers, and volunteer (in what capacity goodness only knows!) into the French service. He thought that this would be a more dignified process than returning in the capacity of the prodigal, particularly as he (Ropy), in the course of life, had not once but several times called on his parent for the immolation and preparation of the fatted calf. This is an age, too, when a prudent parent thinks twice before consigning that tender animal to the butcher, and is apt to reflect in a practical manner on the current price of veal. Ropy's project had been discussed between us, in those walks by night along the silent waste, amidst other vague projects long since vanished out of my memory. It came to nothing; for we could not get leave to go on shore; probably owing to orders from Sir Booby, who, I really believe, would have sent us home in chains, had it been in his power. We arrived safe and sound at Gibraltar, and there we shifted over to the *Sandpiper*, another brig which was going home to England, to be paid off. I left the hospitable board of my worthy friend, Mr. Nails, who, I hope, has succeeded in the profession during these intervening years.

"In the *Sandpiper*, we had a kind of mess of our own, formed, as the old school-room in the *Vindicator* used to be formed, by the simple plan of hanging up a screen round a table. I doubt if Sir Booby would have liked to know this, since it was a good-natured thing of the commander of the *Sandpiper* to permit us such an accommodation, to give us quiet privacy, and not compel us to feed in public on the lower deck. Nothing of any particular interest occurred in the *Sandpiper*. What lingers in my memory with most tenacity, and what is perhaps interesting in its way, is, that all sense of the unpleasant *why* and *how* of one's return home was merged and drowned in the deep sentiment of delight with which the great fact that one *was* returning, inspired the heart. In the pleasantest Mediterranean days, I have felt (from some sudden association of feelings, difficult to analyse) intense longings of the heart towards familiar places where my early boyhood was spent—a kind of pining for some secluded bend in a blue Cumberland river, or a memory of the summer glories of a certain little Scotch lake;—such feelings, indeed, as one can only experience seldom, and which, if they came often, would stretch the heartstrings to breaking. And, in coming home at this time, I remember how the sense of joy and hope (sobered but not saddened by a tinge of wonder and awe) was as vivid within me, and all athirst for the unknown future, as the same feeling had been when I was leaving England years before. It was just autumn time, and pretty early in autumn, when the *Sandpiper*

came into Spithead. Together with the faithful Ropy, whose perpetual good humour and good sense had been constant sources of jollity, I landed (a sunburnt youth of not very opulent appearance, accompanied by the wreck of a used-up kit) on the shores of Portsmouth. I was now free from Sir Booby finally, and as independent as our common ancestor, Adam.

"It was now time (as an old messmate of mine used to say when he got into any embarrassment) for one's friends to exert themselves. I felt the propriety, and also the necessity, of instantly communicating with my parent, who had hitherto only become acquainted with my later proceedings from the papers, which (it being a dull time of the year) had communicated the trial to a curious public at a decent length. My manifesto was brief but significant; indeed, Napoleon's famous one, when he gave himself up, would, with a little alteration, have done very well—*e. g.*:—

"'A victim to circumstances over which I have no control, I have terminated my naval career, and I come like'—

"But no, I have not the audacity to compare myself to Themistocles; nor, indeed, is a too indulgent parent to be likened to an enemy. No. That ancient Eastern story of the prodigal was more in point. I wrote off to my parent, then, briefly informing him that I had returned to my native land, and was entirely at his disposal, and posted the letter with a devout hope that I should soon hear from him in reply. In the interim Ropy and I took up a temporary residence at a respectable commercial inn in Gosport, and disencumbered ourselves of old uniforms, beds, &c., by disposing of them to an individual of the Caucasian race.

"A day or two passed over—no letters from London. It so turned out, as I afterwards learned, that my father was out of town. Ropy and I grew fidgety. Our funds—not considerable, even after our little transaction with the Caucasian (who, with an inborn contempt for my Scandinavian extraction, had set but a small value on my goods)—our funds, I say, were very low. Our bill at the inn was fast attaining a size, not indeed great, but under the circumstances disagreeable. What was to be done! We must get to London; but how? We discussed the matter over and over again, and, by way of recreation, when pestered by thought, we passed whole hours at the plebeian but healthy and amusing game of skittles. There is nothing like good exercise when your mind is bored, take my word for it. If you brood over your perplexity your mind preys on itself, and you get worse and worse. Are you weary with thought?—preyed upon by a sorrow? Then, if you cannot get a swim or a gallop, go for a long walk. It has happened to me in days long after those Gosport ones, to find myself before a quire of paper with a fancy as languid as yesterday's roses—as flat as champagne that has been standing all night in a tumbler. I have popped the paper into my pocket—walked 'end on' away out of town—halted, at last, in the empty parlour upstairs of a village hostelry among the trees—and, presto! I have written away with the spirit of a lark, tumbling out the epigrams as apples tumble from a well-loaded tree at a good shaking! We found the skittles a capital distraction, and the 'Mermaid' pos-

sessed, as you were informed by a board, a *dry* skittle-ground. Depend on it, skittles is quite as much a game of skill as billiards (to play which well used to be one's great ambition as a youngster), and much more healthy.

"Another day came—no letters from London; the BILL weightier by another day. Ropy and I were without Lobb, who, taking a huff at a trifle (perhaps deeming our prospects queer), had started for his native Plymouth with a very curt good-bye, directly after our arrival at Gosport. Ropy and I spent the forenoon at our invigorating pastime, but with less relish than usual;—the manly hand of Ropy did not hurl the massive 'cheese' with that precision which was so often wont to hit the foremost pin on its right shoulder, and hurl the whole nine down with a wild crash! We flagged, and resolved to go and sit in the parlour. Entering that quiet little apartment, we saw but one figure there—that of a personable, brisk, well-whiskered, rather gaily-dressed commercial gentleman, sitting at the table, cheerfully finishing a pint decanter of port.

"Mark that figure well! I have to tell you an anecdote, which I should be a mighty ungrateful fellow to suppress, about that stranger, whom we met so purely by accident. It is a curious anecdote, perfectly true, and not uninteresting to the student of mankind. A conversation about the news of the day sprang up between us, and we had a great deal of chat about the newspaper talk of the time. Presently, the chat grew more personal, and more free-and-easy. The subject came up as to what we were mutually doing at Gosport. Our friend was communicative enough on his part. I am by no means what Carlyle calls a 'reticent' individual, and I drew from my pocket the *Malta Mail*, with the report of our court-martial, and told the stranger who we were. He read the narrative, and after a moment's pause, and to my great surprise, he suddenly said—'Gentlemen, I venture to guess your position; if a trifling note is of any service to you, allow me to advance it.' Whereupon he instantly drew out a pocket-book, and laid bare a packet of crisp Bank of England notes."

Delormie.—"What a devilish good fellow!"

Adair.—"You may believe we thought so. That is an anecdote which one ought to tell for the benefit of the general belief in good-fellowship; and though I know that my friend Tomkins has a ghastly horror of any man's being in want of money, and views him with disdain, I do not intend posterity and my descendants to remain ignorant of this curious phase in my history. I did avail myself of my new friend's offer; gave him, in company with Ropy, an I.O.U.; and, of course, my father's name and address in town. We came up to London in triumph, and it turned out, crossed on the way my father, *en route* to Gosport, to recover his returned prodigal.

"It is not part of my present plan to tell you how I fared in the matter of the fatted calf. Suffice it to say, in brief, that I was kindly welcomed home. But it is my relation to the navy that is my main object now. And so just let me call your attention to the strange upshot of all this court-martial history, which I told you in a few words only the other day at Suffolk Street.

"A man with a *grievance* is notoriously a bore. More than that, a man who considers himself ill-treated, and neglects everything else to pester people about his wrongs, is an ass as well as a bore. A sensible fellow, finding justice not to be had, is not going to wear his heart out in grumbling about it. No; he girds up his loins for what he considers his true duties in life, and goes about them cheerfully, and leaves his persecutors to do their dirty work in their own department, without allowing them to fret him by contact. Understand, then, that this court-martial has now only a distant and historic interest for me. It is curious to know, that an objection which I made as a preliminary to the whole proceedings of the trial, and of which the Court chose to take no notice whatever, induced the Crown lawyers to pronounce the trial *illegal*, and the sentence *null and void*. It is curious to know that no *amende*, no apology, no reinstatement followed upon this decision of the Crown lawyers. Stultified in its intentions, and neutralized in its results, laughed at in the profession itself, and repudiated by the law of the land, the Court yet, we see, had a partial success. I made no very strenuous efforts to rouse the authorities to do justice to my position. When I found they had nothing to add to their former communication, I soon left them in peace. Their 'former communication' had indeed been dull and unsatisfactory enough by itself. I don't grudge labour in a proper cause; but what's the good of dig, digging, when the only yield of the 'diggins' is mud?"

Fontenoy.—"However, the decision of the Court was essentially, so to speak, *annihilated*. Your position, after the Crown lawyers' report, was the same as if you had not been tried at all."

Adair.—"Precisely—that is, I was once more in the *status* of an officer, waiting a passage to England from Malta, at his own request."

Delormie.—"The trial might, to be sure, be flung in your teeth at an election."

Fontenoy.—"Just the thing for a 'Liberal' opposition to do."

Adair.—"One must take one's chance of that. Won't I polish off the Rad. who undertakes to start it!"

Delormie.—"More power to your elbow! Who's going to smoke? I begin to feel a strange longing for iced punch!"

Adair.—"Well, my tale is done."

How we got home, and what a jolly evening we subsequently had, has no special connection with naval affairs, and would indeed be tedious to relate. Besides, whose business is it but our own?

FITZ-GUBIN; OR, "SWELL" LIFE AT SEA.

[The MS. from which I have drawn up this paper belongs to the Mediterranean batch of the MSS. of Mr. Forbessy; and the notes for it were probably written about the same time as those from which I prepared the "Family Ship" and the "Court Martial," for the amusement, as I trust, of the good-natured reader.—Ed.]

CHAPTER I.

Before I introduce Lord Alfred Fitz-Gubin to the public in person, it will be as well to give a little sketch of the history of the now potent family of which his father is the head. In these days,—when Tomkins repudiates its origin, and gets a "sign-manual" to call itself De Tomkeyn—why one cannot be too explicit on such a point. At all events, there is a curiosity in unwrapping a feudal potentate of our period, and bringing to light, below the integuments of aristocracy, the real figure. The transition seems so natural and easy to some people from Nail to Noailles, or from Stank to Stanhope, that the critic feels impelled to trace the process now and then, and speculate on the transmigration. In the Arabian Nights we have princes turned into apes; in the nineteenth century, we vary the matter, and turn apes into princes! Here, however, let not the orthodox scowl or groan; for no assault is intended on "existing institutions," or historic families—to neither of which the present narrator bears the slightest ill-will.

In the days of Queen Anne, one Gubbins emerged from the population into notice, and distinguished himself as a speculator. He was a "contractor," and a money-lender. He did not believe in the fortunes of Bolingbroke; hence Pope attacked him as "Porcus," and Swift wrote a squib, in which he figured as a scoundrel, to a chorus of "Down, derry, down." But our friend had a hide impenetrable by satire; and a good coating of gold, which, gradually accumulated on it, made it still more impervious.

Gubbins early invested in land; and his first purchase (in the heart of ——shire) was the estate of the Castellans, of Castellan, who had never recovered the Civil Wars. Having thus planted himself in that county like a spider, he spread out his web on all sides, and ensnared estate after estate. He lent money on mortgage to Eagleswood, of The Oaks, and got *that* property in time; in a word he was fatal to several of the good county families of moderate means—the regular old houses—descendants of the fighting men of the old days, who most of them carried something in their arms which informed connoisseurs that their forefathers had been feudatories of the great primæval barons of the times of the early Plantagenets. Gubbins next (when he was past

fifty) paid his court to a peer's daughter; selecting one (as became a modest man) of mature years, and small personal attractions. The peer—who would scarcely have admitted Gubbins, at nineteen, to be human—found Gubbins, with Castellan, The Oaks, Riversbray, &c., in his possession, a man of importance. He allowed Gubbins *to elope* with Lady Eveline; and when that had been achieved, he told the fellows at White's of the unfortunate affair, cursed Gubbins's insolence, and was *not* broken-hearted. The jokes about Gubbins and the supply of "horse" to the troops, died away after this blow; and he went to his grave one of the most successful men of his day.

Gubbins the second, I regret to say, was nearly an idiot; in fact, *so* nearly, that all his fortune could not get him a wife; he was *very* nearly an idiot! At his death (pursuant to arrangements of old Gubbins's) a large sum went to the noble family into which the said old G. had married (and, indeed, they deserved it!), but the land went to a second cousin—a Gubbins of the old stock—who, people said, had been brought up in poverty; and, in spite of his proximity to the wealthy house, merely supplied with their old clothes. But he was a man of energy and brains. He showed the old commercial activity; Pitt made him a peer.

A speculative gentleman of that period informed Gubbins the third (Baron Gubbins, of Castellan, in ——shire) that "Gubbins" was (probably) a corruption of "Gubin," or "le Gubin," the name of an old family in Picardy. What more likely than that a gentleman from Picardy should have come over to England a few generations ago, and settled as a small tradesman in London? What more likely, indeed? (said Baron Gubbins of Castellan). Many months had not passed, before the baron got "permission" to assume the name of "Fitz-Gubin;" and in the peerage the family was always ushered in with an account of the Gentlemen of Picardy, and the antiquity of houses in that province. The indignation of Sir Egerton Brydges was something terrific when this story got abroad; but what was the indignation of Sir Egerton Brydges to Baron Gubbins, of Castellan, in ——shire? He married; spoke in the Lords; was remarkable for his strictness in examining, and often voting against, claims to dormant peerages—and died a viscount.

We must not go into the more modern details of the story of the house of Gubbins. Who will deny that the present peer (you shall discover his title, now, for yourself) is a potentate, and that he had a perfect right to send a son into the navy?

When Mogglestonleugh got the *Thunderbolt* (for collecting evidence on the continent about Lady ——, which proved highly serviceable in the divorce case), his first youngster was Lord Alfred Fitz-Gubin. The *Thunderbolt* was flag-ship on the South American station. They excused Fitz-G. from the mizen-top because he was young, and from night watch because he was delicate, and from boat-duty because there were other youngsters to attend to the jolly-boat without troubling *him*. The assistant-surgeon reported him ill at Lisbon, and the surgeon recommended a week at Cintra for him. The minister had a party to meet him. The chaplain gave him a Bible, the

"gift of his well-wisher, the Rev. T. Jenks," as the fly-leaf proclaimed. Fellows in the mess wrote home to "Dear papa,"—"We have a pleasant set of messmates here; young Lord Alfred Fitz-Gubin is one of my most intimate friends among them." Smoggbuckle overdid his share of it, for he lent him fifty pounds, which was soon after returned by his mother (through the captain) in a letter, in which Smoggbuckle was called a "designing person." When he shot a bull belonging to the beef contractor, the captain blew up the beef contractor and paid for the bull. Lord Alfred walked upon velvet through the service.

The *Thunderbolt* being paid off, the Admiralty deliberated as to what was the best ship,—and sent him to China, because they foresaw active service there, and wished to give him a chance of distinguishing himself. He showed such gallantry (against a junk with a wooden gun in it), that Captain Tournspit felt it his *duty* (indeed, could not have rested in his bed quietly had he neglected it), to mention him with praise in a despatch. The Chinese war becoming a mere bore, in due time Lord Alfred came home (by the overland route), and soon after "passed" for lieutenant, and went out to the Mediterranean. This was convenient, for some relations of the family were going to yacht there. The yacht *Giselle* was in preparation for an august party at the time Fitz-Gubin sailed in the *Cocytus* to Malta. They arrived there at a period which naval men will remember as that when Roribel became flag-lieutenant. A sketchy paragraph on Roribel's reception of the news of the vacancy may not be amiss. "It requires," said he, "a particular class of man to be flag-lieutenant. He should be gentlemanly, (here he looked at his boots); handsome (here he pulled up his shirt-collar); of good abilities (here he smiled with self-complacency); and generally popular!" (here he bowed, and rubbed his hands, as much as to say, "Now you have him!") Roribel was made flag-lieutenant, *vice* Maunderson, who had taken advantage of the position to make up to a great wine-merchant's daughter (whom the wags of the squadron christened the Countess of Bucellas), and had retired from the service into matrimony, accordingly.

The *Cocytus* broke down off Pantellaria; why, nobody seems ever to have found out. As there was scarcely any wind she was in an awkward plight. She signalled to the old *Bloater*, *Mrs.* Pappleton commanding (such was Adair's joke, though the newspapers never so described the corvette to my knowledge). The *Bloater* was jogging along as usual, returning to Malta from a cruise, and Forbessy was in charge of the morning watch. He at once proceeded to the cabin to report the event to Pappleton, who left the society of youth and beauty (this was the phrase of the gallant and polished Mules, the clerk; I must tell you he meant Mrs. P., which you would never have guessed), at the stern call of duty—in fact, came on deck to see what was the matter. A boat, of course, had to be sent to the *Cocytus*, and Forbessy went in her to the steamer.

A ladder was lowered as he came alongside. He found Captain Hostibus storming and raging about the deck, and all the engineers under arrest; out of which, however, they were constantly called every

now and then, to see if nothing could be done. Forbessy was walking about the deck, waiting the return of Hostibus from another visit to the engine-room, when he heard a low, languid voice—a voice of blended effeminacy and indifference, saying—"Provoking! and before breakfast, too! very irritating to our friend Hostibus, all this must be. Confounded engineering fellows!"

Forbessy turned, and saw the speaker before him—a long youth, with light hair, and big watery-blue eyes, whose dress bespoke him naval, though it was by no means punctiliously fashioned after the regulations. He looked at Forbessy, and said, lazily, "You are from the corvette, I suppose?"

"I am."

"By Jove! I hardly see my way. I suppose Hostibus must do something, or you do something for Hostibus. But I was thinking—let me see—yours is a rather large boat? . . . I have it."

Here Hostibus re-appeared, and came aft. "Nothing for it,—the corvette must send her pinnace on to Malta, and ask for a steamer for us! She must take on the mails too."

The youth spoke again. "But, Captain Hostibus, couldn't she (the captain paused for the suggestion or advice) . . . couldn't she . . . so very slow, this——couldn't *she take me in?*"

"Lord Alfred Fitz-Gubin," said Hostibus, "the service must be attended to!" Hostibus turned on his heel.

This was the first glimpse Forbessy ever got of Lord Fitz-Gubin. It was characteristic. It would not be too much to say, that it exhibited his naval views altogether. He had been so dandled and pampered during his career, that he expected obstacles to fly before him—like stragglers out of the path of a Roman consul. They say that when the *Lotos* was lost by the genius of Mooner, Lord Alfred thought his chest the paramount object to be saved.

We will not trouble ourselves further with the *Cocytus*, except to say that, by dint of a fair wind, she reached Malta in safety. Next morning after her arrival, a gun-case made its appearance on board the flag-ship, followed by a couple of pointers. Sensation in the *Sovereign!* These were succeeded by a chest of more than ordinary dimensions. Increased curiosity! A fishing-rod and beautiful dressing-case next arrived. ("This is a gentleman!" exclaimed Cuckles, with decision.) But what was the feeling when an object came which was almost immediately recognised as a tent? ("A person of consideration," exclaimed Cuckles.) Lord Fiz-Gubin himself reported his "joining" to Commander Mutter, in the course of the day. The commander, one of the serious school, (who are often of the most aristocratic principles—looking on "dignities," as parts of the "great scheme," and truckling accordingly), received him with *empressement*, and introduced him to Cuckles. Cuckles deliberated as to who were the most eligible men in their mess whom he could form a little "set" out of, for his "noble friend."

In the *Sovereign*, as in most large messes of any pretensions, there is a "red-book" section of men, who, somehow or other, fancy themselves, or make themselves, or are tacitly allowed to be, what our old

friend Jenkins would call, the *crême*. It is the same in provincial towns, and, in fact, in every sphere where a moderate number of people live together. But it is by no means easy to say *how* the arrangement takes place, or distinctly to point out *what* the laws are which divide the sets, or form the upper set. As scientific men are not agreed how fairy rings are produced (though I believe it is certain that toadstools and such *fungi* have something to do with it), so "circles" of society are as difficult to account for;—whatever, too, we may allow to the "fungus" influence in their case! It is not only birth, or only money, or only brains, or only manners;—these are all powers in their way, but any one of them will sometimes make a hit, and I have known hits made by people who possessed none of them. Generally, the blending of various advantages in moderate proportions is the staple of success, and the having a pursuit in common, the great bond of union. Cuckles, then, who was upper-deck-mate of the *Sovereign*,—who had in that position the commander's ear, and was, so far, of consequence,—who, further, was a senior mate and a very shrewd, worldly person, was one of the swell *clique* of the *Sovereign;* Tom Riddel, with the largest income in the mess, and a free, daring way about him, was another; Siddlington, again, by dint of great respectability and careful manners, and an orthodox way of looking at everything, was a third. These and others gave the tone to the mess, which was a sumptuous and stately establishment, beyond the dreams of Benbow.

About one in the day, a knot of fellows were usually to be found in a main-deck cabin, which one of the lieutenants allowed to be made a lounging-place of. The *Sovereign* at this time lay habitually in Malta, more like an immoveable castle in the harbour there—stately, and utterly calm—than a ship. The captain, of course, lived on shore; you might see him any day, trudging along Strada Treale, as his children were dragged down the street in a pony-chaise, by his side. As for the admiral, he was seldom seen, though perhaps oftener heard of than people wished.

To the cabin in question, supplied with a comfortable sofa and chairs, and adorned with a picture of a brigand and his daughter, Cuckles led Fitz-Gubin. The knot were there, consuming ices brought on board by an old Frenchman daily, about whom the legend went, that he came to Malta originally as the son of a noble, banished by the Revolution.

Fitz-G. was duly introduced, and found the conversation busy with the old topics — the admiral, the captain, the *Sovereign*, the court-martial on P—— (not held *really*, because he neglected so-and-so, you know, but because he jilted old Froggan's niece). A new anecdote of Mr. Adair was added to the day's stock by Tawney, who dropped down after copying an "order," to have a chat. It seems that, after Mr. Adair left the *Bloater* for the *Preposterous* ("where," said Tawney, "Ricks swears he'll finish him"), he was crossing the harbour in one of the cutters, when who should pass but Mrs. Pappleton in her husband's gig. Mr. Adair made the crew of his boat toss their oars, *as to a captain*—an audacious professional jest indeed!

"Lord Alfred Fitz-Gubin, our new messmate; Mr. Riddel, Mr. Siddlington," said Cuckles.

"Been in the Mediterranean before, Lord Fitz-Gubin?" asked Siddlington.

"No. I've come out here to look about me a little now, though. I was in China; I was in South America." He said this languidly, as usual, and then paused, as if he had ceased to take any interest in the subject. Have you ever seen a sluggish compass? (But, of course, if a naval man, you have.) The quartermaster must jerk it with the string to keep its mystic force alive and active. Fitz-Gubin often seemed to resemble it.

Old Polonai came in with some ices. "Good morning, old Polonai," said Riddel (one of your sanguineous-looking fellows, close-cropped, red up to the ears, bare-necked and bursting with animal spirits.

"Good morn, Signor Riddel," said the old man, with a meek smile.

"Glace je fais,
On ne me paye,
Je suis le Sire de Polonai!"

said Riddel, jumping up from his sofa to seize his ice.

"That's rather good," said Lord Alfred, looking at Riddel.

"Oh, I made that some mornings ago, about Polonai. 'Gad, he's descended from the Coucys, for aught I know. . . . . I say, Polonai, pick up the spoon, like a good fellow!"

The old man stooped, as he was bid, and gave the spoon to Riddel. (Have you ever wondered, reader, what sort of fellow you would have been by this time, if you had been turned adrift at eight years of age?)

"I'll take an ice," said Fitz-Gubin. The ancient Frenchman brought his tub to the cabin-door to supply him. Polonai, junior (for our friend had married a Maltese in due time, and was now naturalised as a Maltese, almost—though he occasionally disappeared from the island,—"to France" (people said),—a handsome boy, with those intensely black eyes which the Maltese have,—carried it for his father.

"Well, younker," began Riddel, who had "chaff" ready for all comers—"you're the rising hope of the Polonai family, eh?" "Yes, *signor*," said the boy.

"But, by the toe of St. Peter, where did you get that cap worked for you?"

"That, *signor*," the youngster answered with some reserve, "was my sister's making."

Old Polonai spoke to his boy in Maltese, and he went away. The gentlemen of the cabin looked at each other.

Polonai looked up, with his meek smile and subdued manner, "Anything more to-day?" The world had, by long passing him through its hands, and rubbing him to and fro, smoothened and flattened him like an out-worn sixpence;—all the stamp and impress was gone. The world treats unlucky fellows like one of those defaced sixpences one sometimes comes across. They pass to be sure (for what little they exchange for), but you can see that they have everywhere had the ill-luck to be suspected—bit—pinched, blackened all along.

"I think,—no more, to-day. And, Polonai, I owe you something, and here it is," said Riddel, producing a dollar or two.

"Thank you, *signor*."

"And, Polonai—but no—no matter! Good day, Monsieur de Polonai."

With his meek smile, and subdued way, the old Frenchman shambled off.

"I suppose it's a joke about that old fellow being a noble?" said Fitz-Gubin.

"'Gad, I don't know," said Riddel. "I heard so, half a dozen years ago,—when I was here, in the *Burrampooter*."

"Must be a mere joke," said Cuckles, shaking his head.

"I am not so sure of that," said Siddlington. "I remember Campbell of the *Violet* used to say that he had read somthing about the Polonais, and that he thought it very likely—and I know, he said it was a great shame, fellows chaffing the old boy."

"Well," said Riddel, "I really begin to feel an interest in old Polonai!"

"That's capital, upon my word," broke in Corbieton, a mate. "Ever since the son told you that his cap was worked by——"

"Did you ever hear such a confounded, suspicious, evilly-disposed animal, as that Corbieton?" said Riddel.

"I really wonder," said Siddlington, "if there's a 'blood' look about the girl?"

Fitz-Gubin pulled out his watch. "Do you know, gentlemen, I should be greatly obliged, if some of you would come on shore with me, and show me the town: I know nothing of Malta."

Curiously enough, Riddel had been thinking of going on shore, and so had Corbieton, and so had everybody, I dare say, that singularly fine afternoon! So, they descended to the gun-room, and Fitz-Gubin made the acquaintance of the most brilliant of modern messes.

I fear that we shall never attain the art of (what I define to be the true ideal of fitting up a naval mess-room) divesting the apartment of all appearance of being part of a ship! We may aim, indeed, at it; we may smother the lockers in sumptuous cushions; we may hide the deck with the most glittering oil-cloth; we may erect neat book-shelves, and luxuriate in French varnish; and throw around the stern-posts the magic of violet curtains; it is in our power to adorn the tiller, and to make the thirty-two pounders objects of interesting beauty;—but this is all! This all was better achieved in the *Sovereign* than art has ever achieved it elsewhere. The steward (who indeed was now in his cabin, reading a new novel) justly felt that he occupied a position equal to that of the surgeon of a former age, and was reported to be paying his addresses to the daughter of a native officer of the Maltese Fencibles. When he heard, through his assistant (who had it from *his* assistant) that Lord Fitz-Gubin had joined, he expressed his approval; intimated to the assistant that the mess wanted some such ornament; and yawned over the novel again, somewhat rid of the afternoon's *ennui!*

Lord Alfred intimated his approval of the gun-room in very decided terms, to the polite Cuckles, who watched its effect upon him.

"Really, you have made all that could be made of the place, upon my word. We might, to be sure, make an improvement here!" Cuckles was all ears (as usual). "We might, mightn't we, *remove the guns?*"

Riddel looked up to see if he was joking, but he was imperturbably solemn, and perfectly in earnest. Indeed, such was his usual mental complexion. He went through life, and the service, with the most entire good faith—amusing himself, indulging himself, eating, drinking, sleeping, and smoking with a grave continuity of action and self-possession of manner (partly natural, but chiefly the result of his bringing up) which were wonderful to behold.

"We might remove the tiller, I think," growled an old mate.

"What does he say?" whispered his lordship to Cuckles.

"Oh! never mind him, my lord—old mate, of the name of Manton," whispered Cuckles—as an interpreter might render to you the sayings of a Cherokee.

In a little while the party were ready to go on shore. When they went on deck, Cuckles was there, seeing the bitts blacked, and the paint washed—the work which was to be done in Malta harbour, and which must be carefully done, too.

As Riddel was at the side, calling a shore-boat, Fitz-Gubin, who by this time had acquired a wonderful knack of knowing the men, liable to his influence, and whom he generally contrived in every ship, to win and use, chatted very affably with Cuckles. "Mr. Cuckles had been very courteous; would he—might he, Fitz-G., hope he would—just see about his hammock and hammock-man, and—he supposed a good marine was unengaged—but really he was ashamed." Cuckles, civil at every pore to rank—the pet of the commander, undertook everything, and discharged what he promised, like the faithful fellow he was. In the mean time, Mr. Riddel hailed the mess-boat, which you might have known anywhere by its flag,—bearing the mess-arms (a donkey *rampant*), and in it the party seated themselves. There was a scandalous report, by-the-by, about this time, that some youngsters had so destroyed the confidence, which is the basis of all commercial credit, that you could not get a casual shore-boat without difficulty. But this was probably, like a rumour about Lieutenant Bulrush (commanding the *Roarer*, 10), and his *calèche*, a mere idle invention; one of that copious crop of rumours which every season at Malta brings forth. We cannot be expected to waste our time upon these!

We may now—for, by the magic of fiction, we have landed our party in Mula's *Café*—skipping past Strada St. Giovanni and its shops (I say skipping past its shops—and if you will put an evil construction upon our smartness in passing Darba's—why you must!) consider Lord Alfred as having *begun* his naval career in the Mediterranean. For isn't the shore the predominant, the important scene of such career? Whom do you dress to please in the Mediterranean?—somebody on shore. Where did Riddel keep his pony? Where did Siddlington buy his jewellery? Where did Montmart display his waltzing?

"This is pleasant enough," said Fitz-Gubin, lounging in the cool

halls of Mula. He paused. "I like Malta, I think. I think it's as well, though, to be here, *in a ship*."

"To be here, in a ship?" Riddel repeated, somewhat puzzled.

"Why, you know, you sleep out in the sea air."

"So you do," said Riddel, thoughtfully. "Gad, that's a new point in the profession."

"I like the profession," said Lord Alfred Fitz-Gubin.

I am not going, at this time, to take our friends into those circles of beauty and fascination which waited Fitz-Gubin's pleasure. That the admiral knows of his arrival and will probably produce something *drinkable* when he asks *him* to dinner—an event which the gallant officer's nieces, also, look with an interest of their own; that other houses—with that regard for the peerage which is a characteristic of the island—intend to show a proper attention to the "descendant of an ancient family in Picardy," we may, of course, presume. But this evening, I ask your company to dinner in the *Sovereign*, and invoke the shade of Benbow to be present at the board!

Our party has returned to that stately line-of-battle ship, and twilight is wrapping itself round the white island—twilight of a faint blue, through which the hulls and spars of the vessels in harbour rise dark and solemn. As it deepens, the bells of Valetta are ringing, vexing the languid air with their silver clang, clang, to the which answer the bells of Burmola, meeting them half way on the harbour waters, and ringing a half-mournful melancholy note over the marriage of summer and sea. There is a momentary thrill of coolness that almost chills, as the breeze comes noiselessly from the outside ocean, and air, and waters, and bell-notes mingle together. Deepening yet, though the bells jingle as if they would fain frighten the darkness away. In the distance a light glides across the harbour—like a corpse-light gliding to show you where a funeral's path shall be. It is a boat, reader, taking Brown of the *Ganges* to dine with Smith of the *Bustard*. Let us leave the harbour alone. Have not we three hundred and sixty-four twilights to look at in the year, and are we not going to dinner?

The mess-dinner of the *Sovereign* is laid out. Some twenty-five fellows sit down. The steward (elaborately attired) bows as he sees Fitz-Gubin seat himself with the knot at the head of the table—Riddel, Corbieton, Siddlington, &c. His satisfied eye welcomes the mild, familiar glass of china, and silver, and the pleasant gleam of the huge decanters of iced wine. The dinner is the object of constant admiration, and Cuckles daily jokes on its splendour, as compared with that which he supposes to be the habitual fare of the mess (except, of course, those of our degree) at home. (Pleasant Cuckles — thou man of fine heart and fine taste!)

The steward, with a profound bow, now hands to Lord Fitz-Gubin the *carte*. I say distinctly the *carte*. Shade of Lord Collingwood (to whose descendents in the female line, a grateful government would *not* continue the title*)—shade of Benbow, wag your ghostly pigtail, and

* And this, though Collingwood, besides boasting such services, and such a mind and character as were his, was a man of distinguished family! If we *will* plebeianize our peerage, let us, at least, cease to sneer at our plebeians.—Ed.

let us look at the items of the *carte.* (The cook of the *Sovereign* was a man of genius, and will probably die a baronet:—"*Cotelettes à la Trafalgar; Fricassee de Gibier en pigtail antique; Vol au vent, au maintop; Brimbousky marine, &c., &c.*"

These were the leading features of the entertainment that day, with sufficient substantials, of course; which, by the bye, were highly necessary to the youngsters, who could not always, if we are to believe some people, get any of the finer specimens of the *cuisine.* Bung, the master's assstant, made a democratic agitation on the subject, by bawling to the servants after some of the "*ong pigtail hontick,*" but the roar of laughter (which his pronunciation justly raised) soon caused him to subside into silence and boiled beef. What was worse, he never heard the last of the matter. You don't, indeed, often hear the last of a joke in the service, and many a fellow who has got himself a nickname in his first week retains it for life, carries it over the whole globe, and through every grade of rank, and dies in it. Accordingly, the youngsters were perpetually at Bung,—"Bung, any *hontick* to-day," &c., &c.

"Lord Alfred, a glass of wine," said Cuckles, ordering champagne; a luxury in which, to do him justice, he did not often indulge. They drank.

"I like the dinner," said Fitz-Gubin, with his usual deliberation. "The cook is really not bad. *He ranks, of course, as a petty officer?*"

Here, I think, I may close a chapter, and leave the reader to his meditations!

CHAPTER II.

The mere mention of the cockpit, such as it once existed, justly excites a fastidious sneer. The reading public has to be disabused of several notions about Her Majesty's navy. The blockheads who believe that a midshipman "shivers his timbers" are, of course, hopeless, and with them I decline to communicate. But a better informed class may still be ignorant that on board the *Sovereign,* Brummell might have attired his person with all the care which it demanded. Again Fitz-Gubin expressed his satisfaction when he found the comfortable and spacious place for his chest; where a judicious array of curtains made up a cabin, and where his marine had prepared everything for him. Cuckles, whose apparatus was not far off, was busy about the place, keeping the lavatory arrangements of the youngsters within proper bounds. Siddlington, again, in a corner, was devoting to his whiskers that intense and absorbing attention which auburn whiskers demand. How different the leisure and space here, to the absurd difficulties of the *Bloater,* where the wretched Mules wore out his heart in endeavouring to keep up his appearance!

The *toilette* hour in one of your big ships is always a lively one. How properly, in one sense, was the table where the many (for they could not all have curtains and seclusion) washed, called the *amputation table!* How were reputations lopped, and dissected, and pruned, and trimmed over those pewter basins! What pleasantries about Ricks, about the commander, the notabilities of Malta, and the news

of the squadron! What chuckles when Manton, the old mate, could not find his wig! What roars when the DUN penetrated (which he had no business to do, for why the deuce did Jark Treloony, who had the morning watch, let him on board?) to these haunts! There was a laugh, indeed, when Saijan, when Nathan, or Darba came groping along among half-lashed-up hammocks. The Dun, in your place like Malta, becomes quite naval. He knows when the *Intolerable* is going to get her orders; that the *Viper* is to be sent home, because she's overmasted; he hears, as soon as the squadron does, that Captain Ransacker has lost all that money at blind-hookey; and he wonders, as everybody wonders, what the devil Ransacker *will* do this time.

That laughter from the youngsters, when the Dun makes his morning call, is to the philosophic ear a melancholy sound. What a number of us have joined in it at sixteen, and sighed at it at six-and-twenty! This association of humour with the serious events of life (as the apparition of the Dun eventually becomes) is very strange. We joke in youth about dunning, about matrimony, and about hanging, I believe, more than any other subjects. Yet, infalliby, the time comes when we pay—we marry—and if we don't hang (as is to be hoped) yet we think with seriousness on that catastrophe, and life generally. That morning, the prophetic eye, beholding Livingstone the youngster giving a huge order to Darba, might have seen through the vista of years a vision such as Livingstone would have shrunk from, could *he* have foreseen it. Horace's *Cura* sticks not more closely than the fatality of the Dun.—*Post equitem sedet.* Here he is, behind you on the hack you have hired, and on which you are trotting from Valetta to Citta Vecchia—or by-and-by, along the pleasant shores of Baiœ, or the rocky brown hills of Greece, or the heath-lands of Troy, or the rich green fields of Smyrna. He mounts the "trireme," viz., the pinnace of the *Bellerophon*, which you command, and the boat at Richmond wherein you pull years after. When you are starring it, I say, in London, or shooting red-legs in Brittany, there is one fellow who knows your movements as well as any of your family. It is DARBA of Strada Reale! Awful thought! He will write in time to your venerable parent, and request him to pay the enclosed bill "out of your son's patrimony" (suggestive Darba!). Something will ultimately have to be done about that man's bill. . . . But in the interim, here is Livingstone, young and downy-cheeked, light hearted and light tongued, giving Darba a large order. For a year, Darba will make no mention of the matter, and Livingstone will spend his ready money in forgetfulness of the man—whom he dimly intends to pay some day, when (as it will turn out) neither his cheek nor his heart are as fresh and unworn as they are now. The age requires two treatises—the philosophy of dissipation, and the philosophy of Duns!

The day began in the *Sovereign* with the crossing of the topgallant-yards, after which, the hammocks having been tortured into perfect smoothness of outline, a party of two were sent to potter about the dockyards, or elsewhere, and the huge vessel lay still as the waters which reflected her glowing copper, or her gleaming hull. Awnings

spread and yards squared, she was as quiet as the island itself in the sea. You might lounge on the poop, and watch the bright green and yellow boats glitter across the harbour, like dragon-flies—gaudy as lizards; or the town almost misty with the intense sunshine, and fancy the days of the Order of St. John back again, and the Podgerses and Rogerses still in their chilly northern homes. A whole day, nothing would break your reverie but the shrill pipe of the dinner-hour, when the fruit-boats swarmed alongside, and when poor old Polonai the meek, with his boy and the ice-can, came shambling over the ship's side, bowing to the officer of the watch,—modest before the sentry—civil to everybody.

Fitz-Gubin was loitering about the upper-deck at noon, and had just thrust into his pocket the admiral's invitation to dinner (that morning arrived), as the veteran Polonai came on board. Fitz-Gubin gave a little hasty glance round the deck; Cuckles was away; his messmates of the watch were far aft on the poop, sitting (there is no good denying it) in perfect idleness on the spanker-boom. Fitz-Gubin came up to the gangway. I have mentioned his solemn, determined manner. I have to add that concealment was a strong feature in the young gentleman's character. He rarely let anybody know what he had in his thoughts; still less in his intentions.

"Hee! Polonai. *Glace.*"

The old man was just about to descend the main hatchway. He turned back.

"Monsieur no take it in the cabin?"

"Non. No. Here, Polonai!"

The veteran complied. It was a sight to see Fitz-Gubin leaning against the bitts, and with perfect deliberation, consuming the lemon-ice. He put some money in his hand, with the glass, and was turning away.

"*Mais, Monsieur, ce'st* too much," said old Polonai, eagerly; "you not have so much to pay as this, monsieur."

Fitz-Gubin. "*Lord* Fitz-Gubin, Polonai! . . . Never mind, Polonai. Quelque jour, je vous ferai une visite, peut-etre, et donc."

"Milor Fitz-Gubin. Prenez le money, if you please!" And the old fellow, with many bows, and a slight colour over his withered old face, forced it upon him.

Fitz-Gubin walked aft in meditation. Riddel and one or two of the men had just come up the companion-ladder.

"I say, Lord Fitz-Gubin, we've been wondering what's become of old Polonai to-day?"

"Have you? Why, *I* saw him a little ago knocking about," said the youth.

"Fox, of the *Queen*, has seen his daughter; so he said, last night, at dinner. He swore she's an angel," Riddel observed.

"Ah, well, perhaps she is. How hot the day is!" said Lord Alfred Fitz-Gubin.

Whereupon, Lord Alfred (who, bless you, could not be occupying his mind with the family of an itinerant vendor of ices), edged away. A moment afterwards, he was in the cabin of the commander, and asking leave to go on shore, "to dine with the admiral."

POLONAI AND FITZGABINS.—p. 64.

"I should not be likely to refuse you leave on general grounds," said the commander, with a Christian smile, becoming a serious man; "on the present special one I grant it with pleasure! You will find that household, indeed, a charming one. Beauty, with genius and gentleness—these are, I say it on the authority of my personal observation, its characteristics."

And the commander smiled, as if addressing the compliment to the persons themselves—as indeed he would have liked to have done, I dare say; perhaps he thought something of the sort might reach them from him, through Fitz-Gubin.

To make matters still more agreeable to our friend, he gave him a seat in the cutter, then on its point of landing a parcel for Mrs. ——, his wife, under the charge of a midshipman! The cutter was cushioned, gilt, varnished, and adorned with a tiller that would have been an ornament to a drawing-room table, at the cost of said midshipman, Leslie Clare (lost last year, I observe, poor fellow, jumping after a negro who tumbled overboard, and would have caught cold, if an English gentleman had not risked himself, and so lost his life, in picking him up). Leslie Clare was the only midshipman who had a successful contest with Cuckles. Cuckles had wished to send him in this cutter, which he commanded, and just after he had had the first touch put to it, to bring the beef on board. Clare appealed to the commander; the commander decided that the jolly-boat should go. He was a joyous youth; his family were rich: all went well with him, till he met the ill-omened nigger, who proved the agent of his fate.

You are not to suppose that Fitz-Gubin dressed himself in full fig before landing at this time. This would not have been becoming one so essentially a member of the "swell" naval world, with which we have at present to deal. He carried a carpet-bag. He patronised the Mitre Hotel. Riddel had his horse there. Siddlington put up at the Mediterannee. Corbieton preferred the Royal Princess's.

As the boat landed, Lord Alfred turned to Clare, with whom he had scarcely exchanged a word (he associated with none out of a clique in any ship),—"Will you allow one of the men to carry my carpet-bag to the Mitre, Mr. Clare?"

Clare was so surprised, that he involuntarily said, "Yes." Fitz-Gubin bowed, and set off. The seaman followed; and in due order they reached the house, where the obsequious landlord received his lordship with all proper deference. Of course, Snacks had seen the appointment, which had been copied into a special paragraph by itself, in the *Malta Dip.*, for the benefit of the aristocratic "sympathisers," (to use a Yankeeism), who are plentiful in Malta.

Fitz-Gubin never long required aid in finding his way about a place. Already an introduction or two put the threads into his hand. He knew the art—which you may have observed characterises the knowing of the English great world, abroad—the art of comporting himself in mixed society; I don't mean, of course, the obvious art of behaving himself in company (which is within the range of an idiot—and for ordinary purposes a common-place affair to anybody not decidedly cursed with the *air bourgeois*)—but a higher art than that. I mean

an art like that of the fellows who dive in the wreck of the *Royal George*, and who retain their self-composure, eyesight, and individuality, among strange fish, monstrous timber, and mud. In a word, the art of mingling in society conventionally inferior to your own (yet the only society of the place you are in), without committing yourself to it in the slightest degree! Did the fashionable Poodle scouring the Mediterranean in 184— use up the services, the dinners, horses, evening parties (everything that could keep his great soul from perishing in its own exhausted receiver of emptiness), picnics, of every society from the pillars of Hercules to the Golden Horn? Yes. Did he form a tie of decent grateful friendship with one man or family? When Branton, junior (of the Maltese firm), was in town some time ago (awakening Government to the importance of the Gozo traffic in Peas-pods), did Poodle show him any attention? No! Yet, wherever you had met Poodle in the Mediterranean, you would have thought him domesticated in its circles. That was Poodle's art—the merit of which is not to be denied to him. A similar art enabled our own Fitz-Gubin to play off Cuckles for his utility, another man or two for their sociability, and so on; while he knew precisely the worth of each according to his ultimate standard of social appeal. Be wise, my good reader, in your generation, and remember to do with your Cuckles's, &c. as you would with foreign money: piasters are very useful in the East, drachmas in Greece, and dollars in Malta—you are not expected to take them and pass them in England!

All this time the afternoon has been, of course, wearing away; by half-past six, the admiral's door began to give forth a series of thunderings, after each of which it rained in a visitor. Roribel, the flag-lieutenant, was an object of serene brilliance; Sir Ajax Thorp, dignified; Lady Thorp, magnificent; Captain and Mrs. Plimmer, and Miss Plimmer, truly imposing. Of Fitz-Gubin's fresh, sumptuous, and languid appearance, I can only say this, that he looked (can you fancy so charming a figure?) like Narcissus after a Turkish bath!

"How do thoo do, Lord Fith-Gubin? My nieces—— How'th your father, Lord Fith-Gubin?" said the extremely aged admiral, in his peculiar way. These established questions over (and Lord Alfred, remember, though an aristocrat, was only a "mate"), the admiral left him to make his way with the nieces.

"How do thoo do, Mr. Clarendon? How'th your father, Mithter Clarendon?"

So was dismissed Mr. Clarendon, a lieutenant, cousin to the First Lord. And the admiral, a minute afterwards, was wagging his old grey head alongside Sir Ajax Thorp, in close confab.

Roribel and Fitz-Gubin fraternised; they had known each other in South America, and Riddel Roribel was a swell.

"Who are we waiting for?" asked Fitz-Gubin, in a quiet corner with Roribel. He told him.

"I wish he'd come."

"So do I. By Jove, sir! we are to tap some of the *good* claret, to-day," said Roribel, in an impressive tone. "You know our excellent friend is considered rather a screw. In fact, between ourselves,

there was no keeping up the *entente cordiale* over the stuff he used to produce here! 'Gad, the services could not act in harmony; and the island was falling into anarchy. They say Ricks gave him a hint?"

"The deuce!" said Fitz-Gubin.

The laggard having arrived, Fitz-Gubin moved in his order, with Miss Plimmer, to dinner; and found himself between that young lady and the admiral's youngest niece. Miss Plimmer, knowing that Fitz-G. was a lord, kindly overlooked the fact that he was only a mate. In ordinary cases (papa being a captain, you know) she could not have been expected to take much notice of anybody under a lieutenant. As a lover of discipline, I cannot but admire the discipline which in these places arranges such matters. It would puzzle Garter-king-of-arms (an official for whom I have an unaffected respect) to discriminate and arrange precedence in some societies I have known. A captain is a captain we know (and a very strange gentleman he is, sometimes), and that Mrs. Captain Plimmer should take the lead of Mrs. Lieutenant Jenks, in natural enough; but what if Mrs. Jenks's father the alderman be a knight? Is the youngest daughter of a captain in command superior to the eldest daughter of a captain on half-pay? Again, a midshipman is nobody, we know; but what if he is the only son of a man with five thousand a year?

Would Rosa Plimmer have made an exception in his favour in such a case? It may be so. Rosa was pretty affable now; for the third year of the commission of the *Unsaleable* was now wearing away; and in a few months Captain Plimmer and his family must retire into private life. It is, indeed, a touching sight to see one of those veterans, whose eye, the other day, carried terror in every glance, moving about a seaport town, in a blue over-coat — a merely private man; they linger in these towns, I think, as a mourner lingers by a churchyard, musing over the memory of defunct power — meditating on the glory of past greatness.

The ladies departed.

"Lord Fith-Gubin, I hope thoo like the *Sovereign;* Mithter Clarendon, I thrust thoo are comfortable in the *Spitfire.*"

The duties of hospitality being so far performed to these gentlemen, and the "*good* claret" set moving, the conversation of the evening went on with its usual decorum on such state occasions — taking the initiative from the admiral, and Sir Ajax Thorp — and moving (like a state elephant at an Indian festival) in a heavy manner about. Naval news was said little of — indeed, naval talk about that period was half made up of growls about the admiral himself (which you could scarcely expect to hear at his own table); politics were, of course, tabooed; and, finally, you could only wonder, as Fitz-Gubin mentally did, what the dinners were like on the "*bad*-claret" days.

In the drawing-room, where, in due time (but not before Fitz-Gubin's light, delicate complexion testified, by a tinge of faint colour, to the "sanitary reform" which had been lately made in the admiral's dinner arrangements), they adjourned, Fitz-Gubin found the ladies talking about "conversion"—the conversion of the Maltese.

"Can you convert a Maltese?" asked Fitz-Gubin.

"Why," said the eldest Miss Wyoming, smiling, "we have not had much success, hitherto. A system which so weds itself to the imagination of the devotees, you know,—attracting through the senses, as our minister in St. Kilderkin — Mr. Fatton—says—having no such attractions to offer——"

"No attractions about Mr. Fatton you mean, Miss Wyoming," said the genial Roribel, smiling.

"Mr. Roribel is a wit, you know, Lord Fitz-Gubin, and we must excuse him. But you understand me, the absence of all that splendid ornament——"

"Those heavenly little crosses," said Miss Plimmer. "I declare the altar at St. John's—you might fancy it was an emperor's sideboard."

"We know *whom* it is but too calculated to please, dear Rosa, as Mr. Fatton says," went on Miss Wyoming, mysteriously. "But I *do* feel an enthusiastic wish to save — to win — *one* beautiful lamb to the true fold. I should like, shouldn't you, Mary, to convert little Marie Polonai?"

"Little Marie Polonai," replied Fitz-Gubin, mechanically.

"Marie Polonai; do you know the name?"

"I know there is one Polonai, an old man, who sells ices to the mess. At least, I think that's the name."

"The same man," Miss Wyoming went on, warmed by her own eloquence; "they live in a little house in the Strada St. Orsola, with a green gate."

["A little house in the Strada St. Orsola, with a green gate," mentally repeated Lord Alfred.]

"And a kind of court-yard, where there is an orange-tree."

["A kind of court-yard, where there is an orange-tree," continued, mentally, Fitz-G.]

"There is a dried-up fountain, with broken sides—so romantic."

["A dried-up fountain," his lordship went on.]

"Lord Fith-Goobin, I with you a good night. Mithter Clarendon, I with you a good evening." So saying, the admiral, whose load of years made it require no apology for him to withdraw early, toddled off to bed.

Not long after, the party broke up. The girls were quite pleased with the interest Fitz-Gubin had shown in their talk. A hint about a pic-nic to Bosketto had been thrown out, and joyfully hailed.

"A very pleasing face," said Miss Wyoming to her sister, as they were going to bed. "Quite the look of the old blood, my dear."

"Quite, indeed," was the innocent reply.

It was a lovely night, of the whitest moonlight, as Fitz-Gubin strolled away. Here and there he caught a glimpse, through a street, of the sea, which was all alive with light. The air was cool, yet there was scarcely wind enough to disturb the blossoms on an almond-tree.

Need I say, that in Mula's *café*, whose hospitable door was open to the night, there was a large party of naval men? Fitz-Gubin strolled in, bent on the cooling lemonade; and found the usual smoking, supping, refreshment, and conversation going on.

"Yes, sir, Smithett will get the vacancy. You'll see," said a mate.

"Vacancy!" whispered a midshipman to my friend Pug Welby, "he's always running on vacancies, that Moggles."

"Yes," said Pug, "he has always a vacancy—in his head!"

Fitz-Gubin sat down at one of the little marble tables by himself, and lolled in tranquil meditation. He felt the lemonade thrill him with a pleasant coolness, and there was present to his mind's eye a little house in the Strada St. Orsola, with a green gate, and a kind of court-yard, with an orange-tree in it.

I could tell you stories about Fitz-Gubin's South American adventures (only they have nothing to do with our present scenes), which would show you that it was no wonder that he sallied forth after finishing his lemonade, on the present occasion. In his most indifferent manner, he inquired for Strada St. Orsola, of the waiter of the hotel where he changed his clothes. It was not long before he found himself in a narrow and steep hilly street, of which many of the houses were high, but lank and meagre-looking. Nothing was stirring; his own shadow in the moonlight was all he saw, as he walked quietly along, keeping close on one side. Sleep soundly, old Polonai! Come out and look at the moonlight, young Marie!

Fitz-Gubin presently paused, and reconnoitred. "Tall houses," he thinks; "high windows." But a friendly bottle with the boatswain, and a few dollars to some forecastle men, and a *Jacob's ladder* would be made which would dangle as lightly as a cobweb from the highest window in Malta! A *Jacob's ladder*, whereon evil figures (unlike those of the dream of the patriarch) might ascend and descend; know we not such objects? thinks Fitz-Gubin. The boatswain of the *Coromandel* might have told you stories about *Jacob's ladders*. They say, Harry Bulstrode was all but caught with one at a lofty enough window (in all senses), somewhere in the Mediterranean; and that the admiralty promoted him out of the way.

But it was *not* a tall window, nor a high house this, as our hero almost immediately found. It lay back from the street, inside this kind of a court-yard; and here is the adventurer at the gate. Looking in, he sees a figure with its back towards him, sitting, leaning over the dried-up fountain.

The house itself was all dark. With the gentlest of movements Fitz-Gubin moved the gate, and entered the court-yard, with a beating heart. The figure instantly started; back flew a mantilla, and the moonlight fell in a *douche* on one of the prettiest faces—one of the sweetest girl's faces—he had ever seen.

"Hush," said the youth, "I am ill. I am fainting. I come to ask you for a glass of water?"

Putting his hand on his heart, he knelt, and lay on his side on the grass. The girl's face showed that she believed him, and she went inside and brought a cup. As she stooped to put it to his lips, the whole beauty of her face and neck—a neck that the sun had not been allowed to spoil, and beside which you would have thought pearls vulgar—revealed itself to him. Darker eyes, fuller of sweetness and light, never held truth in the bottom of their deep wells.*

* *Verbatim* from Forbessy's papers.—Ed.

"I am better; thank you, in the name of the Blessed Lady," said our friend. (This apostacy he found serviceable in Catholic countries.) "By what name shall I remember you?"

"My name is Marie."

"Then, thank you, Marie. I am better, and must go. You live here?"

"This is my father's."

"I must be going. You have a pretty place here, Marie."

"It is quiet, and we are quiet. Are you now well?"

He rose. "Thanks to you, I am, and must I go home. What a smell of flowers! I must send you a jewel for your kindness, Marie."

"Good night, signor," said the girl, very seriously.

He bowed, and hurried away into the street. He strolled down it with a firm stride. There was a step behind him, and a Maltese voice, eager and hoarse, said—

"Signor, where you been?"

He turned sharp round, and saw a young and brawny Maltese before him, who retreated a stride, and kept a black and glowing eye upon his face.

"Where have I been, you infernal rascal of a *smytch*, what's that to you?"

"Curse you all! that's the way of you all, with your 'fernal ways and 'fernal tongues. By God, a knife the only thing for you! If I think you play your impudent tricks with Signora Marie, I put knife in you, by God, signor. You go make love to your English lady; leave Maltese lady alone!"

As Fitz-Gubin afterwards told his friends, the closing sentence of this "rascal's" speech was enough to make anybody laugh.

"You impudent scoundrel, take yourself off," he said. "I'll have you hanged sir, if you talk to me!"

"You been see Signora Marie?"

"How dare you, sir?" said Fitz-Gubin, sincerely indignant at the fellow's impudence.

"Antonio!" cried the Maltese. A figure started behind Lord Alfred. He started, too, to meet it; but a blow from behind fell with heavy force upon his head, and he sank to the ground.

Let us return to Mula's *café*.

A man entered the *café* late, whom some of the party there knew—a man belonging to the *Vixen*.

"Any of the *Sovereign's* fellows here?" said he, moistening a cigar in his mouth, very quietly, and sitting down.

"Yes," answered Riddel. "Yes," answered Siddlington.

"Because," said he, "there's one of your fellows lying bleeding in a street near the Lascares. I advise you to look after him."

"The devil there is!" said the two gentlemen, starting up.

When Lord Fitz-Gubin came to himself, he found himself lying in his hammock, on board the *Sovereign*, with a wet cloth on his head.

CHAPTER III.

FITZ-GUBIN'S head (for reasons which I need not enlarge upon) did not suffer any permanent injury, or, indeed, any serious hurt on this unfortunate occasion. He was a little puzzled when he came to himself at first, and found a sentry near him, who immediately reported his recovery to the assistant-surgeon. That officer, MacStirk, was instantly at his side, to see how the case was going on, and to administer a draught. Next morning Fitz-Gubin was, of course, reported in the sick list;—"Contusion,—a little fever,—quiet," said the surgeon. So the patient took up his abode in that cabin on the main-deck which we are already acquainted with—decidedly pale and seedy, and with an awkward clot in his hair, testifying to the smartness of the tap on his skull, but not in any danger. Here he spent his time in bed all day, near the cool port-hole, and opposite the engraving of the brigand and his daughter—an object of interest and sympathy to his friends.

What had happened?—that was the question, as people justly remarked. He had been dining at the admiral's: "Couldn't have had too much to drink *there!*" remarked Pug Welby, satirically, when he heard the story. "A row with the police," said others, as if that were a matter of course affair, which it ought not to be, in a well-regulated squadron. "Fell from his horse," Cuckles reported, apparently by authority. The surgeon, no doubt, knew whether the contusion was such as a fall from a horse would cause. MacStirk, with his usual ignorance of the world, must needs blurt out, when the commander put it carelessly to him and the surgeon together (for Cuckles had been chatting with the commander just before), "whether Lord Fitz-Gubin had hurt himself by a fall?"—that it was "more of the nature of a verra severe bruise, such as a maan with a rung——He beg-ged pardon, he meant a stick!"—but the surgeon cut this bore short, and left the commander to take his own view of it. So the commander did; and a charming little narrative, investing the accident with the hues of imagination, reached the admiral's house. Poor Lord Alfred had had a severe fall (these Maltese streets are notoriously dangerous to one unused to them), and the Misses Wyomings sent him works to read when convalescent, including tracts, which found their way to the gun-room, and excited wonder and admiration there. The "Mariner Rescued" (2d) was one of these, and an effort was made to bring its influence to bear on Bung, the master's assistant—of course without any success—by the midshipmen. But, indeed, there is no want of works calculated to awaken the nautical mind among those supplied by Government, if they are brought up from the hold, a preliminary which I have known to be neglected in some of her majesty's ships and vessels of war.

It is to be supposed that Riddel and that set guessed more accurately than the multitude the nature of Fitz-Gubin's misfortune. Cuckles was with him the very next morning when he had moved into the main-deck cabin, and Fitz-Gubin then said, with a feeble voice, "You won't let me be disturbed, Cuckles?—Don't let us have the fellows eating ice, and joking that old French Maltese in here, like a good fellow!" Cuckles promised faithfully that he would see that nothing of the sort happened. In a few days, when he was better, and some of the set were sitting with him, he began to talk a little more freely of his accident. He "had *met* a girl, and, by Jove, he was talking to her——"

"Whereabouts?" asked Siddlington.

"Oh, why, you know I don't know Valetta well. But I had—somewhere near the market, I fancy—met her; and she had just gone, when this confounded cad—by Jove, I never read of such insolence—must needs accost me: and what do you think he said?—'Go make love to English lady; leave Maltese lady alone!'"

Riddel and Siddlington roared with laughter, and the speech of the *smytch* was pronounced one of the most characteristic lately produced by the island. Fitz-Gubin leaned back, and grinned at the reminiscence. "I was so taken aback by the extraordinary insolence of the fellow," he continued, "that I did not notice a man who must have been lurking in the neighbourhood, and who suddenly gave me a blow——"

"Ice to-day, *messieurs?*" said a voice at the door; and there appeared the meek but not vulgar head of old Polonai.

Cuckles was going to expel the speaker, in spite of his age and reputed nobility of extraction, summarily; but Fitz-Gubin, colouring slightly as he saw him, called him in.

"Ah, the Sieur de Polonai!" said Riddel. "Well, Polonai, musing on the downfall of the *noblesse*, eh? An ice, Polonai. When Henri returns, we shall have Polonai on his legs again."

The old fellow, seasoned to chaff, having been trained like a war-horse to stand that fire, by the experience of innumerable ships on board which he had carried the ice-can, went on filling the glass with perfect composure.

"Thanks, Seigneur de Polonai! *Merci!* You know, Polonai, your order brought their exile on themselves by their infernal tyranny," went on the lively Riddel. "I can just fancy old Polonai wopping a vassal!"

Polonai grinned in his mild manner.

"An ice for me," said Fitz-Gubin.

Polonai worked away with the spoon in the crimson mass, pleasant to the eye as to the tongue, and handed one to him. As Fitz-Gubin raised himself——

"You ill, *signor?*" Polonai said, glancing at his bound-up head. Fitz-Gubin coloured a little, and nodded. Polonai looked at him; you would have been surprised to see so much interest in that tame old face. He had a soft and even refined *empressement* (don't sneer, Tomkins, please!) in his manner, as he bowed at the side of the sofa, and pre-

sented Fitz-Gubin with the ice. When he drew back, and stood modestly beside his can, you might have noticed that his eye rested rather frequently on Fitz-Gubin.

The side was piped. The captain was coming on board to hear complaints, which had accumulated since his last visit from his house on shore. The commander had summoned all culprits, and the regular old routine was being gone through; a marine who has polished off a corporal—a seaman or two who have got drunk, and told the officer of the watch they would see him d—d first, are waiting judgment. But the gun-room mess are summoned to an interview with the captain in the admiral's cabin, regarding the carrying of an instrument, known as a "colt," which has been applied to a meagre and pallid youngster, who has complained of the same. So away go the cabin party; old Polonai has glided out; Fitz-Gubin has just composed himself for a *siesta*, with a handkerchief over his eyes, when the door is very gently opened.

He drew the handkerchief off and looked up, and he saw, entering with extreme quietness, and closing the door behind him, old Polonai.

"Lord Fitz-Gubin," the old fellow said in a low voice, "you got that wound in your head in Strada St. Orsola! Hush, *milor*, I am a very old man. I bear you no ill-will, and I respect your nation. One word, only, Lord Fitz-Gubin, take care! Not what I might do, I threaten you with. No, I am a poor old devil, and no matter. But, my lord, be a brave man, and respect all men's rights!"

Fitz-Gubin felt his throat dry as he was going to speak, and before he quite recovered from that effect, and from a confusion which somehow came over him, the old man disappeared. Fitz-Gubin lay there, and wondered over the speech—dozed, and woke up, fancying he heard him at his ear, then slept deeper, and found himself in Strada St. Orsola. There he was at the fountain, and Marie sitting near him, but with her eyes on some object on the opposite side, and never looking at him, and the fountain seemed to fill up with water suddenly, and out of it came somebody who was his father and old Polonai in one, in some unaccountable manner. Then he was at Castellan, at home, and wandering round the old mausoleum where the Castellans used to be buried in the olden time, and *he* was going to be buried there, and thought it very odd that he should know anything about it; and just as the Miss Wyomings were putting a nosegay into his coffin, and Marie taking it away to keep as a *souvenir*, he awoke. The ship's bell was striking, and *not* the bell of Castellan church-tower, and the afternoon was far advanced. The dream impressed him a great deal—and even in these anti-superstitious days a dream will impress people. (Manchester, to be sure, expounds the vision of Jacob, by supposing him to have taken too much meat for supper; it is a great blessing to live in an enlightened age!) He found it necessary to cheer himself up with a little soda-water and curaçoa, and the word being passed for Hobb, that marine soon brought the refreshment from the gun-room—where, by this time, the cloth was laid for dinner, and the steward had broken off the composition of a sonnet to his mistress, to indite the *carte*

for the day. The fragrant and crisp beverage revived Fitz-Gubin, and dinner following (at which Cuckles took good care to send a faithful attendant with plenty of the *Brimbousky marine* to the cabin), he soon only remembered the dream as "deuced odd," and the speech of old Polonai as that of a "queer old fellow." As his head mended, he lay there and meditated on little Marie, and on the necessary precautions to be taken for the future, against violent "cads." For, indeed, he habitually considered a "cad" who rivalled him in these affairs, much as a kind of poacher—one who interfered with the rights of the lord of the manor.

In a short time news came to Malta—brought by a young fellow of the name of Forbessy—that the *Bloater* had been "lost" on the coast of Spain! This was the cause of the arrival of Scrymgeour Forbessy, Esq., in Malta, and his subsquent apparition in the gun-room of the *Sovereign* one fine morning. Open flew the door, and in stalked, to the astonishment of the fellows there (including the convalescent Fitz-Gubin), a long youth in a picturesque but seedy garb, decidedly resembling that of a Spanish privateer.

"Why, hillo—who's this?" asked old Manton.

"Don't you know me? You do, Siddlington—Forbessy of the *Bloater?*"

"The devil! so it is, why, what's the meaning of this rig?"

"The *Bloater's* lost, sir," cried Forbessy, flinging himself on a chair. "Not a rag of my traps saved; the officers and company are to be sent for, and the admiral must send a craft too, to bring away the lower masts and rudder."

"Bring a bottle of porter!" cried Siddlington, with professional zeal, "And you—how the deuce came you here?"

"Pappleton sent me on, in a Spanish merchant schooner, and 'gad, I had to borrow a rig from the skipper, and I figure for the present as Antonio Perez."

"Pappleton's smashed then, by Jove," said a midshipman.

"Nay: they'll try Mrs. Pappleton, my dear fellow." Pug Welby said.

"Well, I'm d—d," old Manton began; "they can't keep a ship in the service now, by the blazes they can't. That's the third ship there's been lost since the beginning of the commission. I don't know what the service is coming to. There won't be a ship left to do the work of the station, soon. I'll be hanged if the men that are appointed now-a-days know how to keep a ship afloat. The service is changed since I joined, I'm hanged if it aint! There was Tails; he had the *Fizgig* in the Baltic in 1814, and he took her off a lee shore—blowin;—by the Lord it did blow in those days! and by Jove, I say Tails—he brought the *Fizgig* safe and sound home to Spithead. Why, they knew how to do it in 1814. But now, the longer I live, the worse the service gets."

That Manton could have continued in this strain all day long, anybody who remembers the venerable mate will at once agree; the key-note (that is, the few simple words which begin the harangue) once struck, off he went;—and instantly, Siddlington winked at Riddel,—

Pug nudged Latimer,—the youngsters playfully capered behind his chair,—and various exhibitions of comic delight began. When he stopped, everybody felt that a familiar bit of fun had terminated:—and then old Manton, wagging his broad coat-tails, disappeared; Fitz-Gubin, watching his movements as a *dilettante* stares at the ribs of some fossil antediluvian. "Bravo, Manton," Latimer cried; and as the door closed behind the veteran, Beaulieu looked up (having heard the oration, with his eyes fixed on the page of a novel), ejaculated—"Rum old cock!" and returned to his favourite writer!

"Go on, Forbessy," Siddlington said. "Capital porter that,—I think? We havn't room for above fifty dozen of it—without displacing the Madeira!"

"I'll go on, my dear fellow; but I feel a barbarian in this garb. I shall have to borrow a rig from you—we're just about a size—till Darba can make me something. I've forwarded Pappleton's despatches on to the admiral, and he will likely send for me, to examine me about the matter in person; you know it won't do to appear before him as Antonio Perez!"

"That's true; come on to the cockpit," said the good-natured Siddlington.

"This will be a serious matter for Darba!" said Pug Welby, with gravity.

"'Gad, I don't know. Except Forbessy, none of the *Bloaters* look like Christians," observed Riddel.

A quarter of an hour's lapse brought Mr. Forbessy, looking like the professional Forbessy of every-day life, to the gun-room again. It was about lunch-time, and a hot lunch was not tardy in coming accordingly.

"You won't be sorry to get a beefsteak, or a quail on toast, again, Forbessy?" said Siddlington.

"Not I—though quails were never common in the *Bloater*."

"No quails?" Riddel said.

"No quails," replied Forbessy, gravely. "But a steak, after the wretched oily messes of my friend Perez, won't be amiss."

So saying, Mr. Forbessy seated himself at table, and seized a knife and fork with the glorious inspiration of sea air, since 4 A.M., stirring in him. The languid youths, who had been three months in harbour, envied him that ogre-like appetite.

"I should like an ice," a youngster said, discontentedly. "But there's no getting an ice to-day, unless you send a man on shore on purpose! Old Polonai is gone."

Fitz-Gubin looked up. It was the first moment he had exhibited any animation for an hour-and-a-half. Perhaps, he felt bored by seeing a stranger attract so much attention, as Forbessy had been doing; perhaps he was amused and not bored, by the county paper from home, which he was lounging over. Even the family of which Fitz-Gubin is a member must tire of that paper, I think; though it every other week or so has "Rejoicings at Castellan—dinner of the noble landlord's tenants—Mr. Kiss in the chair: the cloth being removed, and the usual toasts, &c., &c., the chairman gave the noble

the, &c., &c. (tremendous cheers), the young Lord Evremond (immense cheering), the infant Plantagenet (renewed and enthusiastic cheering)," and so on, on goodness knows what, and how many occasions, *per ann.* Even they, I remark, must tire of that print, and its sycophancy; and probably they despise it, too. But this is a digression.

Fitz-Gubin, I repeat, looked up. "What did you say about Polonai, youngster?"

"What did I say? I said he was gone to Marseilles, somebody said." The youngster was as curt and saucy as a youngster in the *Sovereign* dared to be. For "confound the fellow, and his title" (the youngster afterwards observed to a brother juvenile, during a smoke "on the sly," at the main-deck bow-port), "he never takes any notice of your existence, except just at his own convenience;" and true enough, several people did make some such complaint about our friend Fitz-G. He lived with you, breathed the same air with you, yet seemed to discover you as if you had just dropped from the moon, some day, suddenly—when you could be made useful!

"Now for the loss of the *Bloater*," said Siddlington, as the cloth was removed. "Let me give you a drop of curaçoa—just a globule, if you like—and give us the story."

There were not many men left in the mess, and Forbessy stretched his legs out, and was just beginning, when Lord Alfred rose—begged pardon—and passed out. "Hem!" ejaculated our friend Forbessy—who was an off-hand, open sort of fellow—"I've been *boring* that young gentleman, I fear. I've seen him before, somewhere, too. To be sure,—I remember,—he was in the *Cocytus*, when she broke down some time ago, before our last cruise. Would you believe it, he wanted himself and his traps brought in, in our pinnace, before the mails, if I remember right?"

Siddlington smiled, rather faintly. "Oh, I dare say he was *gâté* as a youngster, you know. We—ah,"—he looked at Riddel—"we find him a good enough sort of a fellow here." Which moderate speech, and mild appeal to Riddel, meant that—that, in fact—we *were* of rather aristocratic tastes in the *Sovereign*, but that we were *not* tuft-hunters! Siddlington's father was a fashionable physician, so his family had lived within ear-shot, and within the *parfum* of the great world, at all events, and had been accustomed to reverence it from infancy.

"Lord Alfred Fitz-Gubin is a young man of great promise, a great family, own half ——shire," said Cuckles, with emphasis.

"——shire, eh?" said Forbessy. Then he relapsed into thought for a moment, and presently laughed, and said, "Oh, I know who he is then! But, however, to my tale; I won't detain you long."

"You know, the *Bloater* was sent some time ago to Barcelona. Mrs. Pappleton had never seen Spain, and justly believing it to be one of the most romantic countries in Europe, why she was curious to visit it! Accordingly, one day in Dockyard Creek, when I was in charge of the watch, I received a note, which I afterwards preserved as a curiosity, and which, I fear, must have perished with my kit. It was addressed to '*To the Officer of the Watch, Bloater,*' and ran thus:—'*Mrs. Pappleton requests that the Officer of the Watch will send the*

Pinnace on shore with the mast out.' I always obey orders, so I did send the pinnace, and it returned with a cargo of bandboxes and bundles, and a message from madam, by the coxswain, that we were to bend the studding-sail gear! I at once saw that we were off, and soon afterwards the commander and his wife came on board, and we got under weigh. Time at sea in the *Bloater* went slowly enough; Pappleton and his relations (by which I mean nearly all the officers in the ship), seemed to enjoy themselves, but for a private gentleman, unconnected with the 'Family,' a 'Family Ship' is at best a dull residence. I was duly asked to dinner, to be sure, but I do *not* take any special interest in the social news of Pleb-Biddlecumb, which was the staple subject of conversation. Once in a way the social intrigues of a second-rate county town—how the respectabilities there try to keep *in* with the county gentry, and to keep *out* retired tradesmen and farmers —may be curious. Habitually, such topics seem (to me at least) rather stupid.

"We left Barcelona when it came on to blow. I had the middle watch, and it was freshening towards morning (as is the wind's way in the Mediterranean) when I was relieved by Joe Bluffet, the master, who always kept the morning watch. Joe had just joined us before we left—a bandy-legged, silent man, of heavy aspect. He took the telescope from you, glanced at the compass, 'Hum, Nor' and by West,' lays her course—hum—and devil a word of 'good morning,' or 'fresh breeze,' or anything approaching to human communion. He called Mrs. Pappleton 'Marm,' and kept out of her way, or if she spoke to him he touched his cap and answered the question, and sheered off. She called him, in private, 'the bear,' and Pappleton took a dislike to him.

"Well, this morning that I am speaking of, Bluffet came up, as heavy and as silent as ever, and did not seem to think it was blowing a bit. Some fellows think it never blows in the Mediterranean (if they had been on the coast of Syria in the winter of 1840, they would have found out their mistake), and I dare say Bluffett, who has knocked about the planet since he was four feet high, did not expect much from a bit of a breeze, where we were. He took the glass with the customary grunt, and I went off to my hammock, tired enough. When we were routed out at five bells I found, as I had expected, the breeze much higher, and then began the comforts of a gale in a small craft; hammocks below; such an atmosphere and such a deck; hatches battened down; smoke filling the lower deck; Black and White Pappleton prostrate in the berth; the mess-boy crawling aft with some coffee and ship's biscuit in a tin pot; and, when you'd quitted all this with disgust, the moment you shot your head up among tarpaulins, through the companion way, slash went the spray in your face; you found the deck wet fore and aft, and were deafened by the roar and shriek of the wind through the gaunt and dripping rigging and bare-looking masts.

"The first day the wind was hot and unrefreshing; always an unpleasant feature, and at sunset there was thunder brewing. The horizon was black, streaked by flying masses of grey, and the darkness

was setting well down, when a window seemed suddenly opened in the horizon's wall—you know that look the black sky has: a lid seems to rise and quiver for an instant, disclosing a whole region of shuddering fire, then shuts, and the thick, sonorous roll of the thunder hurries along. The close-reefed main topsail gleams white against the sky with intensity for a minute; then a pause and more wind, and the heavy clatter of rain. The lightning showed the yellow jaws of Pappleton looking ghastly indeed, I can assure you, that evening. I had the first watch, and Pappleton stuck pretty close to me. 'Bad night, Mr. Forbessy! I hope Mr. Bluffet is alive to the importance of looking out.' At eleven, being near his ladder, I heard a faint sound, which proved to be the cabin bell. Mrs. Pappleton was in want of mulled wine! Men were moving to and fro, and to old Bluffet's inquiry what was the matter, I heard this answer given. For two hours that veteran had not opened his mouth; he ejaculated d—n!

"Next day passed, and the third day of the gale arrived, when the question was, 'where were we?' 'Mr. Bluffet; where's Mr. Bluffet?' was perpetually in the mouth of Pappleton. A wag among the crew picked up the expression, and as I was passing forward, and as a huge roll of the ship capsized half a dozen basins, out of which the men were taking their pea-soup, I heard one of them cry, 'Oh, Lord! where's Mr. Bluffet?' and the laugh that followed. Pappleton, meanwhile, kept descending to the cabin to pacify Mrs. P., and coming on deck to see the master. Then he would look up to the masts, as if he understood all about it (which he didn't), and then go and fiddle about the binnacle, having a notion that there was something wrong with the compasses.

"At noon it was whispered about, and reached the ears of Mules, who brought it to our dog-hole of a berth (you should have seen the berth by this time), that there was a difference of opinion between the master and Pappleton. The master said we were off Los Murnos, and Pappleton declared we were fifty miles south of, the Reschio Palado. The boatswain, Crabb, communicated his opinion to me, gratuitously, that they 'was neither of them right, or he'd be d—d,' and indulged in the gloomiest prophecies. When I went up to keep the four to six I found old Bluffet and Pappleton's controversy coming to a crisis.

"'Mr. Bluffet, I'll wear and keep her W.S.W.; there's an error in the compass of——'

"'It's my opinion, Captain Pappleton, that you are mistaken. I beg distinctly to recommend——'

"'Wear ship, Mr. Forbessy,' said Pappleton.

"'Then, Captain Pappleton, I must beg to give up charge,' says the master.

"'Eh? Here. Stop, Mr. Forbessy,' and again he was undecided. (You know we had a talent for losing our way in the *Bloater*. I have known her dodge round and round Malta, without finding it, before now.) He then consulted Hackles, the first lieutenant, and it seems that *he* agreed with him, for when I was swallowing some tea about seven, I heard 'Wear ship!' The last thing I heard before turning

in, was that the wind had abated, and sea too, and that we were running before it.

"It was about eleven at night when I awoke with a start, and fancied somebody was tugging at my hammock. By Jove! we had STRUCK. A man who has felt that sensation, that peculiar electric vibration which a ship gives at that moment, will not readily forget it. '*Hands save ship!*' a voice bawled out close to my ear; one spring into my trousers and jacket, and I was up. The watch below were crowding to the forecastle ladder, and in that press, '*Oh, Lord! where's Mr. Bluffet?*' was again heard from a wag. The ship had heeled over, and there she lay, head on to a black-looking coast, and thump, thumping as the sea rolled in.

"Hackles was giving orders when I got to the quarter-deck; but Pappleton was in an abject condition—as well the poor fellow might be, with Mrs. Pappleton to look after. She, however, proved the trump of the occasion, for she girded herself up to meet it; and while P. was yellow, and in that confounded state of indecision which is his habitual plight, she backed up Hackles with might and main, and urged him on. But the *Bloater* will never swim again!"

Forbessy paused for breath, and just as he did so, the head of a quartermaster showed itself inside the gun-room door. "Mr. Forbessy, sir, commander wants you." Up jumped Forbessy, and when he reached that officer, found that he was required to attend *instanter* at the admiral's, to be ready to answer any questions about the *Bloater* which might be put to him.

"This is a very serious business, sir," says the commander, shaking his head.

Indeed it was so. The service had lost a corvette, and—and—the devil of it was that a relation of the admiral's commanded her! I tremble for Bluffet, the master, though!

CHAPTER IV.

FORBESSY paces along the street *en route* to the admiral's. You have had a glimpse of him before, I think? He is tall, has a lounging walk rather, and a somewhat careless, if not absent, manner in ordinary; but gather up those cords of manhood when OCCASION comes, and you have a sinewy force of a man! A certain easy refinement hangs loose about him, and is not less effective for being unconscious. He has the northern head, and northern eyes of grey blue—such as you may see (planted on a body well able to take care of the same) any day that you choose to ramble among the hills and dales of the Nith, or in the valleys of Cumberland. He has, likewise, an under-lying seriousness (not of the tract species, but human and natural) becoming a man who wishes to do something in the world, and in an age which seems inclined to break loose from all hereditary and traditional ideas—to preserve, at all events, a vigorous personality.

Forbessy gained the house. The brilliant Roribel received him, and showed him into a waiting-room—justly so called, as he presently

found. Nobody, of course, had any attentions to show to our friend, who was scarcely known in the squadron or the island—a mere midshipman of the *Bloater*, in fact! The door opened, and a servant looked in, and went out again; came in once more and locked up something—the Marsala perhaps! Half an hour afterwards a cat began to scratch at the outside of the door, which was, at least, an incident. A quarter of an hour passed, and a light laugh was heard on the stair, of which his imagination might make the most. Then Miss Wyoming and a sister came in, with a mighty jingling of keys, and taking no more notice of our friend than if he had been an arm-chair, retreated again with the aforesaid Marsala—a fact which, combined with the distant odour of roast mutton, seemed to show that it was now dinner-time. At last, Roribel bounced in suddenly, "This way, Mr." (he had forgotten the name already), and Forbessy was shown in to the admiral, who was poring with aged eyes over papers.

"Thit down, thir."

Forbessy sat down, while the old man stared at the paper, and in a few moments, "Tho, it theems, the *Bloater* is lost? Sthand up, thir!"

Forbessy stood up.

"How did you leave them?"—Forbessy replied.

"Who wath in charge of the watch when she struck? *You*, thir?"

"No, Sir B——," and he told him. It was one of "the family," unfortunately. I wonder if the admiral wished it had been Forbessy?

"Hem." The admiral fumbled a little with the papers, turned his faint and dim eyes up and rubbed them, asked another question or two, and dismissed Mr. Forbessy, who was to be borne on the books of the *Sovereign*, till Captain Pappleton and his gallant crew arrived in Malta for trial. Thus was Forbessy brought within Fitz-Gubin's sphere of action, but for which circumstance the public might never have heard of the career of that great aristocrat.

* * * * * *

Fitz-Gubin was now recovered from the effects of his accident, and showed himself (one often wondered why he made no charge for the exhibition) on deck and on shore, in his usual health. His headquarters on shore continued to be the "Mitre," and there, if he was not inclined to go off to dinner, he dined. He had a running account at the "Mitre." He had a running account with Squirrel for horses. He played a good deal at billiards. He also played a good deal at the "Café Verdanti:"—not at your absurd and stupid dominoes, but, upstairs, in *the* room—in the private room, in fact, where only a select party assembled, and where there was some excitement to be had. Roribel and others met others, and it was four in the morning before they supped and broke up, so that Fitz-Gubin sometimes reached the *Sovereign* just as the hands were turned up to exercise loosing sails. On these occasions he popped on blanket trousers, a jacket, and cap, and attended to his duty; sleeping all day afterwards, as you may easily believe. The advantage of sleeping all day obviously is, that you are

lively at night-time; and thus, when the excellent *cuisine* of the gun-room had set him up, he was just in the humour to go on shore again. There was a good deal of luxury and idleness going on about this time; and several times had the admiral launched "general orders" on the subject. These compositions are the "Bulls" of the navy. They were favourite compositions with the admiral, who, in the consciousness of great literary talent (and, upon my word, any literary man might envy an author who had the power to *make* people read him!), always proluded at great length, and with a magnificence of language worthy of a better cause. To be sure his eloquence was a trifle wasted on some fellows, but what can you expect? Here, the mess are lounging about the gun-room in the forenoon. Looking through the stern port, Clare observes answering pendants flying up, and knows the *Sovereign* is signalling. Presently boats shoot out from under the great sides of the line-of-battle ships, and midshipmen come on board to copy a

GENERAL ORDER.

"The maintenance of that unsullied excellence of discipline which, whatever form it may assume, is the chief characteristic of advanced perfection in a squadron of His Majesty's ships is not compatible with a high scale of personal extravagance on the part of junior officers.

"The commander-in-chief, Sir B. B., K.C.T., G.G.H., has observed with regret, that this salutary knowledge—if that can be called knowledge which is obviously imperfectly apprehended by those whom it most behoves to *know* it—is not diffused in the squadron under his command, or, if diffused, has not penetrated to the consciousness of officers, or if it has penetrated to the consciousness, has not yet availed to govern the conduct of officers; he therefore is compelled again to address some observations on this important subject to the officers under his command.

"The commander-in-chief, Sir B. B., K.C.T., G.G.H., therefore proceeds to propound——"

But bless you, our venerable friend could go on in this style to any extent, as might be proved, did we choose to avail ourselves of a collection of his documents—very kindly placed at our disposal by a butterman. Suffice it, that the old gentleman made various efforts to control the exuberance of the youth under his command—with what success people acquainted with the subject know.

One of these great lucubrations reached the *Sovereign* one day about noon from the admiral's office, and with it a private note from Roribel to Fitz-Gubin, of very elegant appearance, and perfumed so that it justly excited the scorn of Bung, whom Cuckles sent below with it, and from whom Fitz-Gubin received it. His formal "Thank you, Mr. Bung," made Bung secretly writhe; but we must not be detained by Bung, who, indeed, has returned to the main-deck to see the spirits served out, as becomes his rank.

"Dear Fitz-Gubin,—It is complained that you never call here, and

you know what Chesterfield says*—'Women make no allowance for business or laziness.' I think this fine day ought to tempt you; we can have a ride, afterwards, somewhere; and unless you are in a hurry 'off' at night, we can give Pump his revenge. Bolus† is boring the dockyard people, so don't be afraid of him.—Ever, "R. R."

Fitz-Gubin seemed to approve of the suggestion, for he was seen half an hour afterwards, strolling along Strada Reale.

Fitz-Gubin was one of those fellows who are never, what you might really and truly call *intimate* with anybody—not even with a mistress. Any decent intimacy of heart and cordiality was unknown to his nature; but for all that he could be friendly and easy enough. To please himself, he could be handsomely liberal at times; and if he sometimes took even elaborate pains to win a pretty girl, whom, after all, he had nothing worthy the name of a passion for, he could be generous and lavish of everything but heart! He was cold; but then there are different sorts of coldness. The coldness of marble one can admire; but there is a coldness which affects others with dulness, while the being itself has a liveliness and warmth for its own purposes. The eel is cold; but how active its vital principle—how it can enjoy its mud.

I know not why I broke into this paragraph so suddenly; but it may be useful; let it stand. Yet do not fancy that I would have you picture young Fitz-Gubin as one of your absurd, unnatural abstractions of calculating coldness, only; his look might, perhaps, make you think better of him than my words have. Here he is—there is a fresh, soft look about him, and his big blue eyes seem harmless, as he knocks at the admiral's door.

Miss Wyoming was glad to see him looking well, still, and so was Adeline Wyoming, who had a most innocent admiration of aristocracy, and thought that every "lord" was necessarily the direct descendant of a companion of William the Conqueror. And so both chatted away, of course not forgetting the poor old *Bloater*.

"So provoking," said Miss Wyoming.

"I always thought Mrs. Pappleton could have saved the ship if needful," said Adeline, with facetiousness. "But she must have been sleeping on the watch, as, I hear, all you sailors do."

"That depends on whether we have anybody to think of," said the polite Roribel, who, by the bye, thought of very few people indeed. They said that he was attached to Miss Wyoming, and then that it was to Adeline, and then that it was to Lilias, but nobody knew; and Roribel loved himself better than all three put together.

"I wish people would not lose ships," said Miss Wyoming; "it puts uncle out so much. I am sure these horrid courts-martial might be done without, if people would take care. Everything would go on happily,—and poor Captain Pappleton is invaluable at a pic-nic."

"He is the best mixer of salads I know," said Roribel, deliberately.

* Fitz-Gubin did not know that Chesterfield had made that remark; but Roribel knew it would please him to be thought to know it.—Ed.

† Who is Bolus meant for I wonder?—Ed.

"He is a kind of relation of ours," Adeline remarks (he was indeed). "A most good-natured man, Lord Fitz-Gubin. I'm afraid he'll be reprimanded. So unpleasant."

"If it doesn't all turn out to be the master's fault," said Roribel, good-naturedly, and withdrew on business. So the conversation ran on, on other topics, among the three.

"I hope your sister is very well?" Fitz-Gubin, recollecting that there was one absent, suddenly said,

Miss Wyoming looked a little serious. "Lilias is employed on a little task of *duty* to-day. By the bye, Adeline dear, perhaps she is tired, and would like some lunch."

"You know we endeavour to aid, as far as we can, our friend, Mr. Fatton, in his endeavours to enlighten the poor people here. We ought not to spare any trouble in such a task, and I am sure this poor beautiful child——"

The door opened, and Lilias Wyoming came briskly in, all unconscious of a visitor, accompanied by MARIE!

The colour came very suddenly to our friend Fitz-Gubin's face this time you may be sure. "Bless me, Lil—," Miss Wyoming was going to have exclaimed, but she checked herself, and, rising up, with her best air of ladylike superiority and Christian patronage, she said to Marie, in Italian, "I hope you are well, child, and have attended to Lilias. This is our little *protégé*, Lord Fitz-Gubin!"

Marie's large and solemn dark eyes lighted full upon him, and Fitz-Gubin bowed. He wondered whether she remembered him. He was silent, and Marie, with an inclination of her head, looked very simply up, and said, "I have seen you, *signor*, before. Are you well now?"

"What?" says Miss Wyoming, looking no little surprise.

"Oh, I can explain that," Fitz-Gubin said. "I thought I remembered the face! The day of my accident, you know, Miss Wyoming, I was ill, and, passing near your friend's house,—at least, I suppose it is her house—I asked for water, and—and—*she* brought it!"

Marie stood and looked at him, and said nothing, keeping her quiet magnetic eyes on his face.

"Ah," said Miss Wyoming slowly; and in a moment young Marie was spirited away by the other sisters. Upon which Fitz-Gubin began to talk with great vivacity on the subject interrupted by her arrival, to convince Miss Wyoming he was no way startled by the incident, and having prolonged his visit to the furthest verge of politeness, he took his leave.

"What a pretty girl she is, to be sure!" he soliloquised as he strolled along. "I only saw her by moonlight, but she's quite as lovely by daylight too. And what an innocent goose to say she had seen me before there! But it was knowing of her to say nothing when I gave *my* version of the business, too. She's a little knowing devil, I believe, after all. 'Gad, that is it! I never took such a fancy to a girl."

After this fashion mused Fitz-Gubin, till he almost tumbled against Riddel, who was sauntering along the street.

"Why, you're in a brown study," said Riddel, (he might have said, more accurately, a *black* one!)

"So I was indeed." They joined arms and walked on together.

"That's a pretty ring of yours, Riddel, where did you buy it?"

"Oh! in Malta here—at Greenstone's."

"I wish you would introduce me."

"With the greatest pleasure, let us go at once!"

Mr. Greenstone had, not very long before, opened a jewellery establishment, and he had a highly promising business. He was the most enterprising of tradesmen; he added a charm to his gems by the way in which he handled them to show them, and would have laughed at the notion of ready money. Mr. Greenstone was much encouraged in Malta!

When Mr. Greenstone found that Lord Fitz-Gubin, of the *Sovereign*, was the gentleman who proposed to glance over his collection, he glided about like a gnome in a mine. Gold, and silver, and jewels, and that fine filagree, which is as delicate as hoar-frost, fell under happy lights, and glittered like live things. Fitz-Gubin and Riddel peered, and admired, and compared. Riddel's taste was gross rather; he loved much gold work, and bore sometimes in front of him an elaborate barbarism representing a battle-axe grasped by a mailed hand.

Fitz-Gubin selected for himself a ring, and then seemed doubtful what to do. He fidgeted and paused; but presently Riddel happened to go to the door.

"Mr. Greenstone," said Fitz-Gubin, "send that bracelet to me at the Mitre Hotel early to-morrow." He moved to the door. "Ready Riddel." "All right." "Come along then." And away they went; Riddel remaining ignorant of the purchase which his friend had just made, and to make which was the object of that gentleman's visit. This was just his mysterious way. In South America, men who thought him an ordinary *roué*, were surprised to find out, every now-and-then, that he had been carrying on an under-current of plot; he got wounded; or a consul came on board storming with a complaint; or an anonymous letter threw his captain into fits; or he lost five times what he could afford at play, and the "family," as usual, had to do something. Yet happen what might, he was ever, outwardly, the same indifferent, every-day, mawkish Fitz-Gubin, and carried into the scenery of romance the person of an every-day worldling. He sought beauty as pertinaciously as a caterpillar does flowers, and with scarcely a finer feeling than its dull greed. But enough of description for the present.

Fitz-Gubin, then, and Riddel having dined, proceeded to the opera and stationed themselves in the pit. Up rose the curtain on the eternal old mediæval castle of the establishment, and enter the baron in the same court-dress obviously worn by his ancestor in the thirty years' war! The seeond act was wearing away, when Fitz-Gubin gave a start, and muttered something. Riddel turned to see what was the matter.

"Why, Riddel, do you see that d—d huntsman in the green coat?"

"I do."

"That's the scoundrel that I told you of, who was so insolent that night."

"Is it?" says Riddel with animation. "Bravo. Now I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll go out and raise the fellows in the *cafés*, and by the toe of St. Peter, we'll duck him! We'll pin him at the stage door, and bring him off!"

"Hush, man!—no, no! Everything will come out. Sit down, Riddel, do!"

With an ill grace Riddel (who had a superfluous amount of champagne in his veins) composed himself. The truth was, that Fitz-Gubin instantly divined that Marie might be in the house. He turned cautiously round, and everywhere sought the dark eyes—the eyes compared with which, Fitz-Gubin, thy soul was dull!* From box to box—from row to row, his vague, eager look went. Yet, he missed one face he knew. Miss Wyoming was there, and saw him; and she watched him, too, and had thought of the scene with Marie, and of the possible interpretations of it, oftener than he imagined. As soon as she saw his inquiring look, she took care to avoid it, and keep back, but not without a watch upon him.

Fitz-Gubin again turned to the play, but disappointed. The music rolled over him like mere meaningless noise. He looked with a calm dull hate and scorn at the Maltese who had brought the wound upon him, and thought that the beautiful Marie could never surely love *that* poor beast!

Meanwhile, Mr. Riddel, of whom a fixed idea had taken possession, (and the tenacity of one idea is a common phenomenon among the results of too much wine) had glided away from Fitz-Gubin's side. He passed quietly through the pit, and when he saw a man he knew, he telegraphed him to come out. Forbessy, who was sitting by himself in a corner unobserved, saw individuals here and there whose faces he knew as naval men, stealing away to the doors. But Forbessy was entranced by an object which he had just seen a quarter of an hour before, and that object was one that long afterwards recurred to his vision among the soul-and-body-oppressing heats of African Bights, and elsewhere. The dull vision of Fitz-Gubin had passed over Marie, after all. Forbessy was near her, and if ever accident but let a glimpse of her face be seen, his eyes lighted upon it, and watched it with the most perfect admiration which a face had ever excited in him. Vague sadness and still worship took possession of him, and he lingered, resolved to know who could be so beautiful in that dull place where his heart had no home.

The opera was over, and there was a great rush and crowd in the narrow street, where *calèches* were crowding to the doors, and people swarming out. Mr. Riddel had been seen, during the past half hour at Mula's, at Micallef's, at Ricardo's; and a whisper had gone abroad that "a lark" was in preparation. A party had gathered under his auspices, and was gathered together near the scene of action.

* *Verbatim* from Forbessy's MS.

"Miss Wyoming's carriage!" bawls out a servant, and off rumbles the *calèche* of the admiral.—"Sir John Sumper's carriage!" "This way, Sir John." "Good night! Home!" Next carriage—doors slammed. "Out of the way, *Smytch*, d—n you!" "Beg pardon, *sar!*" "Drive on!" Such was the Babel of sounds with which the little opera emptied itself: and amidst the confusion, Riddel and his party had assembled rather lower down the street.

Out of the press, in deepest mantilla, shrouded, passed a figure which Forbessy had already learned to know; and Marie, with quick, small steps, moved away along the street. "Shall I follow her?" he thought. "I have no right to follow her! No! I won't destroy the picture she has left in my imagination, by knowing anything of her but that she is perfectly fair."

But before she was out of sight, she paused and stood still.

"Somebody is to take her home," Forbessy thought. "Poor child! —Her father, I hope: I would not like to know that she had a lover. I will pass by her, and see her face once more!"

The crowd was now thin, and the street becoming deserted. Riddel's eye was on all doors. Out came a Maltese from one.

"Hah!" says Riddel, "I know his face! Good *Signor Smytch*, a word with you," says Riddel to the young Maltese.

"With me! What you want with me?"

"Why," says Riddel, mimicking him with the most intense contempt, "I want duck you for d—d impudence to English officer some weeks ago! You and your friend hurt English officer; we go duck you!"

With a waive of the hand, out came a knife. Riddel rushed at him, and seized his arm with a gripe of iron; with his other hand he seized him by the throat, and squeezed him; the Maltese's struggles were awful! Down came the knife on the pavement with a ring. "Bravo!" was the cry. Riddel kicked away the knife with his foot and a moment afterwards, down they both went, Riddel uppermost. "Police!" was called out; windows flew open; rattles were sprung.

"Now I've got him!" Riddel muttered. "Give us the lashing."

In a few instants of fiery excitement they bound and gagged the unfortunate fellow. He was hoisted aloft by the determined band, who carried him bodily, along unfrequented streets, to the harbour, and to a boat.

It is not, I trust, without a due feeling of indignation that I record the fact, that the breaking light of the next morning found that Maltese exposed on the *fairway-buoy!*

CHAPTER V.

Cuckles, the artful and worldly, came on deck next morning early, and set the crew to work at the holystoning, and other processes in good time. For that useful mate had not been on shore, or dissipating the previous evening. He had taken a weak glass of Marsala and

MALTESE ON THE JANWAY BUOY.—p. 86.

water, with his cigar, on the main deck (edging in his chair, unobtrusively and modestly, near the lieutenant's smoking-party, so that he was asked to join them, and did his best to be agreeable), after which he got his desk out, and pottered over his accounts till half-past ten, when he went to bed, cool, calm, and with a conscience at rest. *He* was not a rake, nor a spendthrift, nor any such bad man; but was only a hypocrite, and toady, and worldling, and schemer, and very much respected!

Cuckles walks about the deck, while the sleepy fellows huddle up the hatchways with their hammocks. The grey morning fills the harbour with its gradual light, and the houses of Valetta loom through it, looking grey too.

The quartermaster, steady Marshall, turns his glass on objects far and wide, and has never his eyes away for many minutes from the flag-staff of the palace. An object attracts that glass towards the harbour's mouth—and again—and once again.

Marshall glided down the starboard poop-ladder as quickly and quietly as the fairy in a burlesque. What man moves like a sailor? He reached Mr. Cuckles' side. "Mr. Cuckles, sir. Fairway-buoy, sir! Man on it, I think!"

Cuckles took the glass from him, without speaking; looked, and said, "Yes, there is. Call away the first cutter; and Marshall, go for Mr. Leslie Clare."

Away went the quartermaster. The youngsters who were puddling about the deck, barefooted (at the express command of Commander Mutter, a sworn foe to goloshes, on youngsters), brightened up at the excitement of the news. In five minutes the blanket trousers of Leslie Clare, Esq., appeared on deck, that young gentlemen looking very sleepy and glossy, having been just disturbed in a dream, in which partridge shooting and lunch were the principal features. Clare and Cuckles never wasted words on each other; and Clare simply marched into his boat to obey orders. "Take that man off the buoy, and land him," said Cuckles; and Clare shoved off to do it.

"Give way," said Clare, and off started the boat.

Here was a spectacle! The cutter's crew were tittering, fore and aft, as they drew near the buoy. It bobbed up and down in the water, and astride on it, with a leg on each side of the huge ring, and lashed to that ring was the unfortunate Maltese. The paleness of the night's rage and watching was visible through the brown tints of his face; his black eyes were glittering with fire. The cutter circled round, and presently sided on to the buoy.

"Why how the devil did you get here?" said Clare, who had been on board all the evening, and knew nothing of its events. The Maltese made no answer—fumbled in his side a minute.

"Take care, sir," said the coxswain, "he's feeling for a knife!"

Clare's hand fell on his sword hilt. "Is he?" said he; but he took it away again, as the Maltese raised *his* empty, for we know how he had lost his knife.

"Come, jump in," said Clare, who was a good-natured fellow, and pitied the unfortunate man's plight. Not one word came from the

Maltese. The men cast him loose, he came into the boat, and still he never spoke. The boat steered to the usual landing-place, and there Clare landed him; keeping dead silence, and preserving the same, as, without bow or ceremony of any sort, he sprang upon his native rock and strode away.

"There's murder in that chap's eyes, sir, or I'm a liar," said the coxswain, from his perch behind, taking off his hat, and getting a "chew" out of it.

"I dare say," said Clare, and the boat shot along towards the *Sovereign*.

"Landed the man," said Clare to Cuckles, briefly, when he got on deck.

"Very well," replied Cuckles. On which Clare returned to the cockpit to finish his sleep, and Cuckles proceeded with the morning's work, the monotony of which he relieved by sending a youngster to the mizen-top, barefooted (to make him hardy), and by caning a second-class boy. Easy, gentlemanly employments, congenial to Cuckles' mind, and the practice of which had gained him some repute as a "disciplinarian." For there are grades in disciplinarianism, as in everything else; and links to be traced, as, from a Bacon to a baboon, so from a Sir Charles Napier to a Cuckles or a beadle.

It was observed in the cockpit of the *Sovereign*, at dressing time that morning, that there was an unusual demand for soda-water; and Bung complained of the peril in which he was placed by the flying corks. Stories were afloat about the adventures of the previous evening—about serenades astern of various ships in harbour, and suppers at Joe's; and several gentlemen were observed to be sunk in languor at breakfast time, and there was a frequent request for something devilled at that meal. On such mornings there is a coolness about a yellow melon which cannot be too highly praised, and more than one fellow was up to his ears in a huge slice of that fruit, which was going to "great lengths," you will admit! Presently Cuckles descends to his morning meal.

"Rasper," says Cuckles, "my omelette—sharp." And down he sits.

"Omelette?" says Fitz-Gubin, speaking for the first time that morning; "I'd like an omelette!"

"I fear," says the faithful Rasper, "there wasn't only heggs enough for the one you ordered, Mr. Cuckles, sir."

Cuckles had ordered that omelette over night; the thought of it had cheered his morning watch; he felt a tremor run through him: could he—should he offer it to Fitz-Gubin? Fitz-Gubin maintained a dead silence, as much as to imply, "Here am I, wanting an omelette; let an omelette be brought. What the deuce is to become of English institutions if I can't get an omelette?"

"Oh," says Cuckles, with a grin—which looked damnably uneasy to a knowing eye—"have mine, Lord Fitz-Gubin, I don't care about it!"

"Eh? You're very good, really," Fitz-Gubin replies, in a cold-blooded, matter-of-fact manner. "As you don't care about it, why—"

"You don't mind garlic, of course?" said Cuckles.

"Oh, d—n it; I hate garlic, like poison. Never mind, thank you, Cuckles."

Rasper showed signs of being about to interpose a remark, but Cuckles' eye checked him. He brought the dish, and Cuckles devoured it—though, between ourselves, it was as perfectly free from garlic as the veins of Fitz-Gubin from the blood of the gentleman of Picardy. By such little strokes of ready cunning as this, Cuckles somewhat justified a belief which he entertained of his diplomatic talents. He deserved to enjoy the dish, and apparently he did so, for no word did he utter till his plate was clear. Then, he opened the subject of the Maltese who had been found on the fairway-buoy.

"Fairway-buoy," said Fitz-Gubin, spreading marmalade slowly. "Was there a cad on the fairway-buoy?"

"Yes," Cuckles answered, looking over at him to see if he was only pretending ignorance, and ready to give a pleasant leer should such prove to be the case. But Fitz-Gubin was quite serious.

"Rather a cool berth for a cad," said Fitz-Gubin. "Did he appear to enjoy it?"

"I can tell you about that," said Leslie Clare, from the lockers. "He looked, when I cast him off and landed him, as if he'd like to cut my throat. He's a black fellow, with a mark over his eyebrow; and it's my opinion he'll lie in wait some night for some of us, and will cut our throats."

Fitz-Gubin looked grave. "Why, Riddel, is it our friend of the opera?"

"I'm afraid it is," answered Riddel. "Serve him right, too.

"But," said Fitz-Gubin, "did not you feel you might compromise *me!*"

Fitz-Gubin rose in a dignified manner after he had uttered this characteristic speech, and left the gun-room. Riddel had a head-ache, and lay down on the lockers without making any remark; Cuckles assumed a serious air; Siddlington whispered to Beaulieu that "he thought Lord Fitz-Gubin took too serious a view of the matter," like the polite fellow he was; old Manton, who had just taken down a battered old cocked-hat box (in which he kept his cigars) from the place where it lodged, immediately began,—

"Well, I'm d—d; I don't think discipline can last in this squadron. I don't see how! When I entered the service, a youngster would have been flogged for half the tricks there has been played in this harbour within the last three weeks." And so he ran on for a few minutes, *more suo*, to the general amusement, till he had run himself out. I have known stagers of the old school, who were both wise men and good examples, and proper givers of advice; but there are others who differ from the moderns just as an old Dutch clock does from a new watch—make more noise in telling you the time of day, but keep it no better than the last dandy invention.

At noon, or not long after, down came a midshipman from Commander Mutter, with a bit of news and a message. "Commander

wants the names of all the fellows who were on shore last night, and the time they came on board!" What a sensation!

"When the deuce did he give the order?" said Beaulieu.

"This minute. The information's required from every ship in the harbour, said the midshipman.

"That means mischief," remarked Riddel. "I see Sir B—'s hand in that suggestion. Well, put down, Riddel, Esq., two A.M."

"It was nearer three, I fear, said Beaulieu.

"Was it? Why, what time was it when we had the brandy after floating the *Smytch?*"

"Why, not much after one! But you forget we had a game of billiards after that. And then, you know, we knocked up Joe Sprogaleff, and his wife put her head out of the window; and we went to Boyetrel's, and they wouldn't let us in, and you kicked the door in, and refused to leave the house till they brought some supper——"

Riddel groaned.

"—And the waiter came in with a ham and some bread and butter, and you would have a bottle of champagne and a lobster, and Boyetrel was going to send for the police, and you made him sit down, and we wouldn't leave till they brought some more brandy. Then you wanted a cigar, and, don't you remember, we met Wallop, of the *Jupiter*, and he was drunk, and wanted to fight the marker at Mula's; and you went into a police-office to get a light, and insisted on being locked up, till we dragged you away——"

Riddel gave another piteous groan.

"Whereupon, Wallop began a song about a cavalier, and we all came down to the harbour, *without* serenading Ricks, as you finally proposed."

"Riddel, Esq., four A.M., I fear must be the entry," said Riddel.

The midshipman wrote it down, and added the names of Beaulieu, Corlieton, and others. "Anybody else?"

"Yes," said Forbessy, "I must be put down."

"Why, Forbessy, this is the first time I've heard your voice this morning."

"So it is," said Forbessy; "I am dull, I suppose."

"Anybody else?" was once more asked, after the entrance of Forbessy's name and hour. At that moment Fitz-Gubin entered, and was informed of the inquiry in progress. He seemed rather annoyed; and the mess were surprised as he dictated—"*Lord Fitz-Gubin, five* A.M."

Why did Forbessy feel chilled as he happened to look up at the speaker? Who knows? Have you ever felt in the presence of a man that he had an element in him which was repugnant to your spiritual nature? He is a dunce, perhaps, but *his* sneer will wound *you*. He has a disagreeable relation to you—you don't know how. Out of some such sentiment came the notion of the evil eye, of the evil genius, of the fascination of witchcraft. You can call it, if you please, a "natural antipathy," but you do not *explain* it. A touch of this ran through Forbessy at that moment, and he thought, as he looked at Fitz-Gubin, —was it your cold, hollow voice that startled me only? Why do I

shrink from it? Or what, in the name of mystery, is the destiny that binds together you and me?

Fitz-Gubin's announcement, I say, surprised those who remembered that he had not joined the party of the previous night. They were, indeed, beginning to find out that he was not a very communicative fellow. Here, indeed, was a man who lived with you, was familiar with you, and the rest of it, and who carried his heart locked up, and the key in his pocket; who travelled in your company in life (as an iceberg travels in company with a ship) yet would part with you for ever to-morrow with a nod and a good bye! You wondered what the deuce his notions about existence were, or his object in life at all. But, to be sure, what business on earth many men have might puzzle us; they dress, and dine, and die, and never seem to think it odd that they should exist for these purposes.

The midshipman wrote down the entry, which showed Fitz-Gubin to have been the latest of all arrivals on the previous night; Riddel turned round on the lockers, and composed himself to sleep; Forbessy leaned back in his chair, and mused.

Fitz-Gubin turned languidly over the pages of a novel, seeming to think it strange that nobody did anything to amuse him. Then he strolled out, and proceeded to the cockpit to dress himself; for he ceremoniously went through the various toilets of the day, and soon a yellow glare in the fore-part of that place showed that he was busy. Commander Mutter observed that Fitz-Gubin did not ask leave to go on shore till he had dressed himself for the purpose; whereas it would have been a little more modest to have postponed his adornment, and not to have looked quite so confident of obtaining permission. This might have irritated a less Christian mind than that of Mutter; but he remembered "what St. Paul had said" (to use a favourite expression of his), and did not altogether forget the—last edition of the Peerage.

When Fitz-Gubin reached the Mitre hotel, where, as we know, he had his head-quarters on shore (and where notes were left for him from Roribel, from his tradesmen, from fellows in the regiments, &c.), he had a neat little parcel handed to him by the polite and dignified landlord.

The landlord was one who boasted that he had an eye for a gentleman, or indeed "know'd a gentleman when he see'd him," if you prefer his own expression. A gentleman in fact (whose steward he had been) had placed Sproggs in the Mitre—endowing him with a wife, by way of further kindness, and (you don't know how people talk in places like Malta) with a child to begin with! Mrs. Sproggs was a buxom, dressy, lively mortal, who never allowed her husband to show himself too much, justly believing that she was far more likely to be agreeable to strangers than he was. But to-day she was out, and it was Sproggs himself who gave to Fitz-Gubin the parcel, which (we know before he opens it) contained the bracelet from Mr. Greenstone. Sproggs had pried into it, and afterwards told a friend he knew "what Lord Alfred was after," and remarked what a sly gentleman he was.

As he opened it, the light broke from the magic stones; he had none but a sensual feeling for the beautiful, but that he had keenly, and he

was pleased with the glitter. How the bracelet would become Marie's arm! If he could only get an opportunity of putting it on? Or, should he send it, and whom could he employ? Who was this knave of the opera? Would it not be as well to buy him out of hand, and not have a ridiculous controversy with him? If that man could have been—I don't say murdered before Fitz-Gubin's eyes in any cruel manner, but sunk into fifty fathoms water with 68-pounders quietly and effectually—he, Fitz-G., not seeing it, and no questions asked—he would have decidedly liked it—authorised it. Men's hearts are as bad as ever they were, as anybody ought to know from his own; we are more effeminate than our ancestors, and bloodshed shocks our nerves more! but that is all! What matters it that your skin is a little thinner? Just reflect a moment, good reader; Claudius does not carry off his tradesman's daughter by force now; but bless you, he tells her lies, and gives her jewellery, and a brougham, and a box at the theatre, and gets Old Virginius into a place in the Rag-bag office! Is he any better than the ancient patrician? In the same way, we do not fight with each other, and pay fines for maiming,—why?—because we want to stay at home, and make money!

Fitz-G. was still gazing musingly on the bracelet, when he heard a step on the stairs; and just as he whipped the ornament into its case, and the case into his pocket, Roribel entered. The face, the whiskers, the air of that elegant creature, were as light, and as cheerful as ever.

"Fitz-Gubin, have you forgotten where we dine to-day?"

"Dine! are we engaged?"

"Then you *have* forgotten. This is Mr. Bulder's dinner-party, and go you must." Fitz-Gubin acquiesced; he had a very vague recollection of Bulder's invitation, and no particularly vivid one of his person; nevertheless, he looked on dinners as scenes that must be gone through, some dull, some lively, some good, some bad; and on Bulder's dinner to-day as a *routine* dinner to be eaten. And he instantly rang his bell; and when he emerged from his bedroom, he looked, I am bound to say, a worthy companion for Roribel. They were a pair of deities in the eyes of certain circles in Malta; the Castor and Pollux of the service, twin children of the Latona of aristocracy!

Shall I give you, good reader, a letter of introduction to my friend, Mr. Bulder, of Strada Polentoni? I shall be very happy.

"My dear Sir,—You will oblige me by showing any attention in your power to young Mr. Brown, of the *Auricula*. He is the son of the late Captain Brown, who distinguished himself so much in the last war (his invention, you will remember, was twenty years under the consideration of the admiralty); and I am interested in his success, for he is a youth of parts, and I fear my poor friend Brown did not leave his family too well provided for.—I am, my dear Sir, &c. &c."

Perhaps this is not the kind of introduction which would do much for you? Indeed, I fear my friend Bulder would ask you to meet young Galipotti, the doctor's son; give you a dinner ingeniously compounded of the *reliquiæ* of his last dinner-party, and go to sleep after

it, leaving you to employ yourself on some watery claret. Let us try another.

"My dear sir,—This will be presented to you by a young friend of mine, Mawker Pemmison, just appointed to the *Vestal*. You are familiar with the name of his father, Mawker Pemmison, M.P., the well-known member for the wealthy town of Strikeham, of whom every man of business has heard. I dined with him yesterday, and Lady Alicia expressed her hope that Mawker would meet with friends in the country to which he is going.—My dear sir, yours, &c., &c."

Suffice it to say, that this was a "Pemmison" day, and as a man of the world (which, of course, it is your ambition, as a young man, to be), you will agree it was the best day Fitz-Gubin could have had for dining with Bulder.

They have, I believe, in Malta, a hundred copies of Debret (Mr. Muir of Strada Reale may correct me if I am wrong). The Bulders had looked out Fitz-Gubin, of course, in their copy, and gloated over the account of the grandeur of houses in Picardy. Bulder respected aristocracy as most people do, that is, he did not so much respect the thing itself, as respect the respect for the thing! Do you understand? And the Bulders enjoyed, by being abroad, the advantage of entertaining far greater people than they could have hoped to entertain in England. When Lord Troubadour's yacht arrives at Bombakea, Lord Troubadour must dine with the consul, or mope on board, and know nothing about the place. When the Countess of Ostrich's yacht is in want of repairs, and is laid up in Malta for the purpose, she must have a corvette to go to Naples in, and she and her party must dine with Prodger. These are great considerations, and worthy of all acceptance by the middle classes, who think of settling abroad. They should make up their minds to enjoy the advantage while the opportunities last; a day comes when the Wyomings retire to Harley Street or Tyburnia, and are potentates no more; a day comes when the ship is paid off—when a Cuckles departs to lodgings near Charing Cross, and a Fitz-Gubin to Grosvenor Square.

Young Bulder cultivated a moustache, and affected military society, but was damped early that day by Fitz-Gubins asking him what regiment he belonged to. The cool, stolid manner of Fitz-Gubin gave no possible hint that he intended a sarcasm; and of course young Bulder looked all the more annoyed for the moment. His father enjoyed Fitz-G.'s mistake, having observed with regret the increasing alienation from business of his son's tasks. For the youth made off, every evening, when he could, to the *cafés* and the billiard-rooms, where Ludder of the Marines, Hunibleston of the —th, and other gentlemen occupied themselves with cigars and pool, and (old Bulder's dinners being famous) were civil to him. There seemed, indeed, every hope that this youthful Bulder, so far from turning out an awkward, reserved, prosperous man of business, would become an elegant and agreeable young fellow, fit for nothing at all, and throw a lustre on the family.

Bulder, had he told the truth, would probably have confessed that he found Fitz-Gubin slow. But he could not have complained of his

manners, for Fitz-Gubin (though his fancy was ever wandering to another part of Valetta) was ever attentive, self-possessed, and satisfied with everything. When the business of the island was talked of, he was mild and reasonable, and knowing next to nothing about it, said that next to nothing cheerfully. Did they talk of the churches, antiquities, people, he was the same composed individual. No advantage more prominently distinguishes our modern man of quality than this. He is, perhaps, at a public dinner: the occasion important; the crowd immense; he has to speak and expound his views; he has no views, and nothing of the least consequence to say. Does *he* blush and stutter like a *roturier?* Not he! He rises, and with the best air in the world, says his nothing, and charms the assembly.

The saloons of Mr. Bulder (for, at a certain stage of a man's prosperity, his rooms become saloons, by their own right) were thrown open that evening, to a numerous assembly. Our friends the Misses Wyoming, were there; Captain and Mrs. and Miss Plimmer; Sir John Sumper and "party," and Sir John Lumper and his party; the Kingfishers, the Crawsters, the Popanells, and many others. And the sea-breeze is so famous for its healthiness, that you may observe it quite revives and brightens up even a reputation sometimes; so that at the houses of the Bulders and others, notabilities from England, of a certain rank, glide about quite blooming, and free from all traces of naughtiness! Fitz-Gubin and Roribel knew these cases of moral convalescence perfectly well, and whispered together, as two figures passed in the distance, about whom stories could be told. It was fine to see these two potentates on occasions like the present, when they were the "swells" of the navy present, or at all events of the junior navy; for we must not forget professional rank, which, of course, takes the *pas*, and has been remarked at times to supply the place of manners, wit, birth, and all that classifies mankind!

"Fitz-Gubin, let us come and speak to the Wyomings, and you ask Miss Wyoming to dance," said Roribel. It was Roribel's duty to see proper attention paid to these ladies, as became a flag-lieutenant; and an attentive, graceful officer he was, performing all offices of chivalry, duly—not entangling his heart, however, as he told Fitz-Gubin, with a sigh. "Charming girls!" said that mirror of courtesy, with his very best sadness. "Beautiful creatures! but I am but a younger son, Fitz-Gubin." Fitz-G. smiled languidly, and thought it very good-natured of his friend to sigh on the subject, and perhaps a little affected of him to sigh to *him*. And so they approached the ladies in question. Some of the prettiest girls in Malta looked with admiration at the two gentlemen, and envied the Wyomings.

"Do you see those two infernal idiots?" said Mr. Jigger, of the brig *Bustard*, to Mr. Wheeler, of the brig *Racer*.

"I do. That's the flag-lieutenant, the oldest one," responded Mr. Wheeler, "the other fellow's a Lord Fitz-Gubin, or some such name."

"They'll promote him to lieutenant *instanter*, and send him to the *Royal Yacht*, you'll see, said Jigger, bitterly.

"Oh, of course. This is confoundedly slow," said Mr. Wheeler,

looking round savagely. "Hillo! here's Mottford of us. Who asked you here, Mottford?"

"Who do you suppose? Bulder, of course. My father banks with his brother; and they always ask me to two balls and a dinner every year."

"Is there any brandy in the refreshment room?" inquired Mr. Jigger, with a business-like air.

"I fear not," Wheeler answered. Gad, I'd rather have a quiet tumbler at Mula's, than go to any evening party in Christendom."

"Why did you come, then?" said a mild young gentleman of their acquaintance, who affected "society."

"Because Kiddleton wouldn't have given me leave to come on shore except to come here; and if I hadn't come, there's Weavel, our purser, in the rooms, and he would have told Kiddleton. Now do you see?" The mild young gentleman was silenced.

"You have heard of the general order, of course," Jigger said. "It was sent out this afternoon, and gives one hundred and fifty-five reasons why putting a Maltese on a fairway-buoy is at variance with sound discipline."

"I wish they had kept the fellow on the buoy till eight o'clock, and then we would all have seen him," Wheeler remarked. "Is there going to be an inquiry?"

"Goodness knows. Probably, as everybody seems to have heard that some flag-ship fellows did it, we of the small craft will have our eave stopped," said the sardonic Jigger.

In the mean time Lord Fitz-Gubin had been dancing with Miss Wyoming.

"Did you like the new *buffo* last night?" she asked.

"Yes," answered Fitz-Gubin; "but you were not there, Miss Wyoming.

"I was."

"Strange that I should not have seen your party, then," he observed. "I looked to see if there were any faces I knew in the house too," said the quiet youth. Miss Wyoming was silent.

When the dance was over, the Miss Wyomings, Roribel, and Fitz-Gubin fell into a group. Roribel began to talk of a pic-nic to Bosketto, which had for some time been meditated in the polite circles of the island. Who does not remember the sloping valley of strawberry gardens, the deserted old house with yet a certain air of old feudal gentility about it — the stalactic cavern, with the fresh fountain bubbling up among its carved and moist stones? That pic-nic was determined on.

As Roribel and Fitz-Gubin were walking together after the party, the subject of the Maltese and the adventure of the previous night came up in their conversation. Fitz-Gubin was regretting that he should have been out so late, and should have figured in the list so very conspicuously. "You in the list!" says Roribel; "You were not in the list!" Fitz-Gubin was astonished, and no little pleased; but puzzled to account for the lucky circumstance. "I shan't complain, however," he said, with a pleased chuckle. They speculated on

the subject, and reflecting whose hands the paper had passed through, concluded that the attentive Cuckles had taken care of the omission, as, indeed, Cuckles had; and the chapter may end as it opened, with a mention of his honoured name.

CHAPTER VI.

One fine day of that autumn, some excitement prevailed in the squadron; it was the day of the pic-nic. They say that the *Sovereign's* launch was one sent on a cruise with wine and other luxuries on board to regale a party at St. Paul's Bay, who had made a pilgrimage to the place where the apostle landed, to drink Moselle, and eat chicken-pie. It may be so. It may be that the ships, and ships' boats, and flags, and men are, every now and then, employed in the service of all kinds of agreeable men and women, and that we are a luxurious, money-spending, debt-contracting generation. "Here's a pretty fellow," exclaims Tomkins, indignantly, "to be sneering at his old profession! Pray, sir, have you never shown your approval of pic-nics, or the *Sovereign's* Madeira?" Tomkins, I like Madeira, and I have been a jolly fellow in my time, but I don't know that that much affects the question at issue." Let us proceed with our sketches of swell life at sea, and make the most of this fine day.

Squirrell, the livery-stable keeper of Strada Borni, found his stock of animals in much request this morning. It will be admitted that naval men ride much better than Commodore Trunnion, in our day; that in Malta we can produce a man or two with credit at the races, though much remains to be done yet, as anybody who has seen Jigger galloping past the royal carriage at Naples, with his trousers split across the knee, knows. But the constant employment of the horses of Squirrell, about this time, was improving the practice of youngsters. Squirrell's horses, in fact, exhibit every variety of peculiar disposition. "Joseph" invariably backs against a stone wall; the "Governor" is famous for his efforts to seize the horseman next him by the leg, and so on. By selecting them by turns, one learns to combat different tricks. By long habit, all these noble animals make a dead stop at the "Dairy," that well-known way-side hostelry, where generation after generation of fellows have paused, and have consumed rum and milk. The policemen about the gates were quite excited this morning, as the conveyances of the party rolled by, and after them, at a canter, with gold-laced caps glittering, the naval men came. Fitz-Gubin and Roribel were the best mounted men there. They were both in plain clothes, and both indignant at Jigger (who belonged to the party nobody quite knew how), who kept shooting ahead at a gallop, and whose trousers, escaping from the thraldom of straps, were constantly approaching his knees. Cuckles was not present, invariably avoiding festivities accompanied by expense, if possible. Commander Mutter was one of the party, being a paternal kind of man, and from general harmlessness, serving well as a he-duenna. The commander had had all his pluck taken out of him in the course of a long and severe matrimonial

training. He was just the fellow to be paternal among young girls and young fellows on these occasions; exercising a kind of restraint, yet not in the way; overflowing with small talk and heavy goodness; moderate in wine himself, but never forgetting the corkscrew. A most useful man! Mounted on a mule, Mutter trotted alongside, first one carriage of the cavalcade, and then another; paying attention to the wives and daughters of the influential people. How is it (as I so often remark) that the serious and saintly party are such worshippers of the authorities? Yet on these holiday occasions, Mutter would be easy and lively with a youngster now and then, having a certain fund of good nature in him, which the consciousness of rank did not altogether keep down. Indeed, how many a worthy man is there in this world, who is spoiled by the big-wig or cocked-hat of power, and who, divested of these symbols, would be universally respected and popular.

The landscape which lies before you as you ride out from Valetta to the country—if country it can be called—is not cheerful to the eye. A white or brown stony surface, intersected by white or brown walls, bounding scraggy and dreary fields, cannot be very much enlivened even by the brightest sunshine. Your gaze wanders to the low-lying horizon, and loves the thought of the sea. Yet there are spots of interest and attraction, both to mind and eye, as you let your fancy and your bridle go pretty loosely, and leave the harbour and the fortifications behind. There are hints and gleams of the beautiful in the stony waste as in ordinary life. St. Antonio, with its palace and gardens, is a little islet of joy, where the heart warms to the glitter of the sweet and cool orange-trees. A little village, quaint but lively, is before you at one turn, with a fantastic chapel, and gaudy and picturesque images basking in corners in the sun; where the gay-coloured attire of the brown-skinned and black-eyed people, is characteristic of their Eastern descent. Or, you slacken at a rather long though not steep hill, and the boom of the cathedral bell through the quiet air meets you on the way. Yes; the genius of romance is alive still in that island. And, are you a sentimentalist, as well as a humourist? then pass from Mr. Bulder's dinner parties—leave Roribel in the burning street . . . . turn into the old building dedicated to St. John—cool, venerable, and with the thick incense smell lingering about it, and loiter a little over the flag-stones bearing the coat-armour of the knights! The "enlightened" individual (I allude to —— Bagman, Esq., the distinguished traveller, who judges of every place by its ability to produce cotton) will tell you stories about their misdeeds; when their day as an order was over, and their great purpose had spent itself: but they were pious, brave, high-hearted gentlemen in their time; and let us beg the distinguished Bagman to allow their ashes to rest!

When our party drew near Citta Vecchia, the population were all astir. Frank came out, cap in hand, from his hostelry, to offer his services; the beggars (of whom Malta is productive, and who rush into unbounded luxury if they secure two-pence) swarmed around; a knot of poor little sucking priests, in black knee-breeches, and stock-

ings: pale-faced and meagre lads, stared from a respectful distance tranquilly, and perhaps (poor fellows) envied the rosy and fiery Jigger who galloped Squirrell's horse Shampoo, up and down the place at full speed. It was a fine sunshiny noon. The party came to a temporary halt; some of them went to see the curiosities of the place—the church or the catacombs; others lounged about where some trees afforded a shade.

"Well," said Roribel, to a section of the party who by natural gravity had approached each other, "what shall *we* do? There's the catacombs, to be sure, *but*——"

Miss Wyoming said, "they were places of great interest, *but*——"

Captain Plimmer said, "Oh highly, highly, you know! *But*——"

In fact, nobody liked to say what everybody felt, that the catacombs would be a bore. Roribel thought it due to his reputation to come brilliantly out of the difficulty.

"Well, we've all seen catacombs, somewhere; and really, because previous generations chose to bury themselves in such a style, I do not see that we should bury ourselves too! I confess," continued Roribel, with rather a wicked smile levelled at Commander Mutter, "I confess that I am a *cheerful Christian.*"

So that notion was lightly disposed of; and for the present they moved into a garden, where seats were placed under an awning for them. Meanwhile the attendants were defiling along towards the Bosketto, with the preparations for lunch; and in their rear trotted on his pony jolly little Lieutenant Bulbous, bent on seeing that the wine was properly put in a cool place, and everything in train. His sunny red face shone as he jogged along. He had not come to see anything, or to enjoy anybody's company, but simply to lunch with an appetite, which indeed is, after all, the vital part of a pic-nic. Roribel directed attention to the retreating figure of Bulbous, and hoped that young Jigger would not get loose among the bottles too early in the day; and was otherwise very lively.

An hour's pause and they proceeded on their journey to Bosketto. The old country house above mentioned, with its yellow old walls looked empty and forlorn as usual. Some faint and seedy vestige of what was once gay painting adorns rooms which were once rooms of banquet; a few words of Latin straggling across the door by which you enter, invite you to festivity. Do the ghosts accept that old-fashioned invitation in the lonely moonlight nights there, and make merry with each other? One could fancy so. Altogether, it is a dreary, empty, seedy, picturesque, old den. It stands there as poverty-stricken in its pride as a poor old Jacobite Scotch peer of the last age. Curiosity made Roribel and some others look in, and they gazed silently about the rooms. Adeline Wyoming, whose pensive love of aristocratic memories we have remarked, bewailed the desolation, and thought Fitz-Gubin must feel quite a brotherly interest in the place.

"How interesting!" said Adeline.

"Yes!" said Fitz-Gubin, in his happy indifference; "But very small. In ——shire we have ruins enough. There are—really I forget how many, old castles within some miles of us. We do what we can

to preserve them—prevent people carrying off the stones, and all that."

"What wickedness," said Adeline, "of them to think of such a thing! But I think the English respect old ruins, and old—old—families."

"They ought," Fitz-Gubin said; "if they don't, why, what guarantee have we for preserving—for anything, in fact?"

"Very true," said Roribel, wishing to persuade Fitz-Gubin he had made an intelligent observation; but flattery was not very potent with that swell! And why?—Because he thought so well of himself that *your* opinion could add nothing to it!

"Is there anything more to see?" inquired Miss Wyoming.

"Why, there's the wall outside, but that's *modern;* in fact, a few years old," said Roribel, pointing to a stone wall in the neighbourhood. This flash of pleasantry made everybody titter; and they left the melancholy old house and proceeded to the garden.

"Lord Fitz-Gubin is very silent to-day," whispered Miss Wyoming to Roribel.

"I don't know that he is ever very lively," replied Roribel, drily. But looking at him again he observed that he *was* abstracted more than usual. His arm hung loose, so that Adeline could scarcely hold it properly.

"Can it be," said Roribel to Miss Wyoming, "that he is in love."

Miss Wyoming looked very grave. Roribel was puzzled. "She cannot," thought he, "possibly imagine that *that* is a marrying man." Miss Wyoming was not such a fool, but, indeed, knew both Fitz-Gubin and Roribel better than they supposed. Roribel was much the more lively and genial of the two men, but in heart, probably, they were on a par—just as a pound of feathers is as heavy as a pound of lead. Mrs. Plimmer, who was presiding in the capacity of maternal guardian on this occasion, knew the truth likewise,—an experienced dame, who had that acquaintance with match-making which is nowhere attained in such perfection as in garrison society.

The day of strawberries was over; but the pool of freshest water in the stalactic cavern was as cool as ever, gleaming calm and cool in the centre of the fretted stone-work—fluted, graven into fantastic forms with fairy icicles of rock, adorned and pointed—speaking of immeasureable time and eternal moisture. Here the summer sun never saw his face reflected; here, like Diana's nymphs bathing, the pleasant claret bottles kept their fine natures most beautifully cool. There was not a drop of romantic blood in the old carcase of Lieutenant Bulbous, yet had he here achieved a spectacle of poetry!

The lunch proceeded in due time. Pop goes a champagne bottle;—maddened by the confinement in such weather the eager wine leaped out to meet the summer and the air, foamed triumphantly into a glass, and died happily, meeting the lips of pretty Rosa Plimmer! Not a cloud was in the Mediterranean heaven. The almond-tree revelled in the heat.

"I miss one face," said Roribel, with tenderness. "I miss Captain Pappleton!—Let us drink his health."

"Poor Captain Pappleton!" said Adeline; "He would have been happy here!"

"He mixed salad better than any man in Europe!" said Roribel, with a gush of fondness. "Ladies and gentlemen! Captain Pappleton has recently had a—slight accident. Let us wish him an honourable acquittal!"

Roribel drank. The company joined.

"After all," said Roribel, overflowing with brotherly kindness, "after all, Miss Wyoming, it is my opinion, as a professional man, that the unhappy loss of the *Bloater* will all prove to be the fault of—I don't wish to impeach anybody—Bluffet, the master!"

In this cheerful manner the lunch opened; Jigger drank any health anybody proposed; "health, sir, the devil's health in this wine!" said Jigger. "Silence, youngster," said Bulbous, who overheard him. Fitz-Gubin was at that moment observed to look round in a bland and brotherly manner; and presently he said, "Oblige me by preparing your glasses—I am about to give you a toast. Ladies and gentlemen ["what a great manner," thought Adeline; "d—d puppy," thought Jigger], "the distinguished officer whose flag we have the honour to serve under ["I ought to have proposed this," thought Captain Plimmer with some pique], deserves the homage of our attention to-day. Himself, one of the greatest men whom our naval history has produced, and represented here to-day [Fitz-Gubin threw into his voice a touch of gallantry] by the lustre of beauty, he commands our reverence and enchants our hearts. I propose, with all the honours, our Commander-in-Chief!" (Great enthusiasm.) Of course, the health was most cordially responded to.—Mr. Thimbleston, ensign of the —th, observing, however, to a neighbour, that "the army ought to have taken precedence; by Jove, sir, why the deuce didn't the army take precedence?" and so forth.

By degrees, people strolled away from the lunching-ground, and lounged about in the gardens, and chatted. Adeline Wyoming went again to look at the old country house; and as she returned, she passed quickly down the garden walk, and she put her arm through her elder sister's and drew her away till they were quite by themselves.

"What's the matter, Adeline?" said Miss Wyoming, "you look quite frightened. What is it dear?"

"I have been in that old house again, and in the room where we were——"

"You saw a ghost, you silly thing!" interrupted Miss Wyoming.

"No," Adeline said, "but I have found this."

And she drew out a small ornament. It was a thin chain of very fine gold, and suspended to it, was a locket, on which was engraved, the word "Marie." The two girls paused, and kept dead silence, a moment. Then Miss Wyoming (who had turned quite pale) said "Run and put it back, you foolish child; why did you touch it?"

"I was so surprised, I—I—did not know what I was doing." The tears came to the girl's eyes.

"Give it me," her sister said. It needed no long thought to tell

her *who* had lost it; and like a glimpse through the dark, she saw now something of Fitz-Gubin's character. The mystery of iniquity which underlies our social life, and which we ignore so determinedly, *does* now and then cast a shadow, where only the sunshine of purity should be. Hints and chills (like those thrills of cold which we feel and cannot account for,) tremble through the frame of society in its garb of safety, and refinement, and purity, telling of something unhealthy and unholy in the air.

Miss Wyoming moved quickly up the garden. Adeline remained behind; she had allowed herself to fancy Fitz-Gubin was one who could be loved, goodness knows why; don't we see that a bird will sit on a stone, if it be only decently like an egg? and don't women give their heart-warmth away, in this unprofitable manner, constantly? The eldest, I say, moved quickly up the garden. She would put the locket in the room again, and Fitz-Gubin would be sure to seek it there if he missed it; and then,—why she would try and not think of it any more; or she would save the poor little girl from——She was full of anxiety and painful feeling when she approached the house, but her heart grew cold as she saw Fitz-Gubin enter it before her. He had gone, plainly enough, to look for the lost locket; she felt frightened to think that he might come out and meet her.

In the mean time the party were growing dull, and beginning to think of moving. Roribel was on the move, and crying "to horse" with his accustomed liveliness. He walked up the garden path, and the whole group broke up and spread themselves out into knots. Roribel reached the head of the garden just as Fitz-Gubin came out of the house with a shade of annoyance on his brow. Miss Wyoming was turning the other way to rejoin her sisters.

"To horse!" says Roribel. "Why, Fitz-Gubin, what's the matter?"

"Oh, nothing, I've been in that old house again, that's all."

"Well, did you meet the ghosts of your ancestors, or what? By Jove I know people in very good society, who *would* be startled if they could see their ancestors," said Roribel. They approached each other, nearer, Miss Wyoming had meanwhile moved quite away.

"But, hillo!" said Roribel again, stooping suddenly to the ground, and picking up something, "what's this? a chain and a locket with 'Marie' on it, treasure-trove, by Jove!"

Fitz-Gubin started. "Give it to me, Roribel."

Roribel was in his most champagne mood.

"Marie, eh!" cried he, holding it behind him to prevent Fitz-Gubin seizing it, "we must exhibit this!"

"Roribel, don't be a fool," said Fitz-Gubin, angrily, and very much frightened that the Wyomings would see it.

Roribel gave the locket to him, seeing him so serious. Fitz-Gubin was delighted to recover it; thought he must have dropped it coming down the garden, &c.

But the journey home was one of the dullest ever known. When one is carrying on any wickedness, one is unusually suspicious, and the manner of the two Wyomings sufficiently disturbed Fitz-Gubin. He suspected Miss Wyoming had seen the locket lying on the ground; he

well knew how it would startle her, and in conjunction with previous circumstances, it would alarm and shock her. He cursed his carelessness as he went on board, and reproached himself for being a "fool," yet never suspected that he was anything worse.

CHAPTER VII.

It is twilight time, and the bells of Malta are jingling away as if they wished to welcome the night in enthusiastically. English Malta is going to dinner. Malta Proper has dined long since, and is airing or resting itself, and happy in the enjoyment of a breeze which is cool from leagues of blue sea. Malta Proper is right to dine early; for delicious above all of Nature's delights is twilight in the South. Nature's highest function is to pacify the spirit and elevate the heart of man. In warm climates you feel more a part of nature than elsewhere. Hence from these climates come Pantheistic religions; in the North you have "frost-giants" and the like—hard impersonations of nature which is severe there, and has to be fought against. The South merges you in the universal; the North sharpens your individuality. The South produces despots, emblems of the universal: the North aristocracies, embodiments of great individualities. And so might we go on to contrast and compare, but that our duty calls us to the personages of our story, and to the events which we have in hand.

We are in the twilight, I say, of the autumn, when all these events of ours happened. The harbour is alive with boats, for the court-martial on Captain Pappleton and his officers for losing the *Bloater* is just over—the second day has concluded the matter; and at every dinner in the harbour the SENTENCE is discussed. Was it fair to Bluffet, the master? Who knows Bluffet? Are not all these Pappletons notorious gabies? How did Hackles give his evidence? Had Captain Bobbles a right to sit? Huge subjects of discussion, which accompany (but do not retard) the discussion of the *Brimbousky marine* and other luxuries; and on the whole, perhaps, give a stimulous to the consumption of the iced wine, so grateful in that climate. There can be no great harm in gliding into the gun-room of the *Sovereign*, and just learning a little about the particulars of the trial. For our friend Forbessy is cast loose on the service again by the dispersion of the *Bloater's* officers and crew, which is decided on; and Forbessy is to figure before the reader in various pages yet, before we have done with him, whatever may become of our Fitz-Gubin and others.

"Have not had such a trial for a long time," says Siddlington; "not since Terryton was tried for insubordination."

"There is a piquancy about an insubordination trial which you don't have in a mere loss of a ship case, though," says Beaulieu, talking of the affair as hunters do of a "run."

"Yes," Riddel said, "Ricks was good. His telling the timid witness that he had a head like a scupper-nail was calculated to calm the poor fellow."

"Ah, ha! and I thought it excellent when he asked where the mid-

shipmen were, and looked so sulky when nothing whatever appeared against them!"

"Did you see Pappleton shed a manly tear during the defence?" inquired a midshipman, in rather an unfeeling tone. (Cuckles made a mental note about *him.*)

"Very good defence, too; Hookins's, I suppose?" asked Beaulieu.

"Yes; I know that touch about the 'memory of unfortunate disasters being a punishment in itself.' He got old Stokey off with loss of a year, for being drunk in the middle watch in the *Fandango*, by that one stroke, I believe!"

"I remain of opinion that Mrs. Pappleton should have been tried," said Pug Welby.

"By ——," began old Manton, "when Fowler lost the *Porcupine* —in '18,—off Devil's Head (by —— not a compass that would work in the ship—there wasn't), and the sails were all worn, and by —— it blew as it never blew on the coast of Spain—he didn't come off so cheap, I can tell you! 'Reprimanded,' indeed! They reprimanded you with a d—d good breaking, and, if need be, brought a youngster to the gun, &c. &c." I cut short Manton, as indeed the mess did, by the various laughs and exclamations which he produced. Poor old gentleman! He was one of a breed gone by now, of whom the last will soon be laid by the side of the pigtails of the dead generations.

This speech of old Manton's has revealed to you the result of the trial to Pappleton. He was "reprimanded;" but Bluffet, the master, was "reprimanded *severely*," and was not to be employed for a year. Everybody else was acquitted. What then remained to do in the case of the *Bloater*, but what good housewives do with domestic breakages, —viz. to pick up the pieces? For that purpose a ship was sent to the scene of the wreck, which brought away the lower masts and rudder in tow; and (the head authorities at Malta regretting that Mrs. Pappleton had lost her wardrobe) there the matter ended! Captain Pappleton was "hereby reprimanded accordingly,"—which did not spoil his dinner: and after much sympathy from the good-natured Wyomings, he and Mrs. P. went to England luxuriously, in one of the "Peninsular and Oriental" boats. He has been employed since, too (as you will be glad to hear, and as we all ought to be proud to know), and I believe Mrs. Pappleton will often talk over the loss of the *Bloater*, in her nautical way, and tell you that if they had "worn" at 6 p. m. or kept W. and by S. after 3, or otherwise done something which they did not do, the *Bloater* would not have been lost.

The talk about the "sentence" having flagged, while the mess were still at their wine, Beaulieu looked round; and observing that many of the fellows, who were not in the best set, had gone out of the gun-room, said quietly, "I did not tell you my adventure last night!"

Men pricked up their ears. "I don't think the affair of any consequence, to be sure," continued Beaulieu, carelessly. "But I was passing along an obscure street, and a fellow tried to stab me!"—Beaulieu sipped some wine.

Fitz-Gubin looked up. Forbessy looked up. The eyes of these young

men seemed to meet naturally, somehow, and having met, to turn away again, rather hurriedly. Forbessy looked especially serious, and there was trouble in the expression of his grey eyes.

"The deuce he did!" Riddel said. "How do you account for it?"

"Nay; who knows? He must have taken me for somebody else. In warding off the blow, I showed him my face; the man made no other attempt, and vanished!"

"'Gad," Riddel says, "there are not many of your inches, either! Stand up, Beaulieu, and show us how you were walking."

Beaulieu smiled, and stood up. Truly, he was a goodly length of a man, Beaulieu. He was the son of an Admiral Beaulieu; but he and his father bore a likeness to a family more illustrious than any known under *that* Gentile appellation. Who knows the exact truth. Yet, few who were up to high scandals, doubted whence father and son inherited the high manner, the royal air. Their personal qualities had not suffered, as their escutcheon had, from the brand of the bastard's bar.

"There is not so tall a man in the mess, and consequently not in the squadron," said Riddel. "We whop the squadron in everything, in horses, in Madeira, in Palestine soup, in exercising sails." (He classified, you observe, in a characteristic order.)

"Forbessy is two inches less," said Siddlington.

"I am," said Forbessy, quietly.

"Lord Fitz-Gubin, I think, is as tall, though," said Cuckles. (Foolish Cuckles, he didn't know what he was about.)

"Ah, Fitz-Gubin, measure!" Riddel said.

Fitz-Gubin was sulky that evening; but he rose, and stood up back to back with Beaulieu. Their heights were, indeed, much the same. A joke or two was made on the point, and on Beaulieu's story, but Fitz-Gubin was quite out of his usual, cool, indifferent tone of manner. He was icy and fretful—prickly with icicles of manner, if I may be permitted such a figure. The party broke up somewhat abruptly; the men went to smoke on the main deck, or to get ready to go on shore, or to whatever else they designed for the evening's employment. And among the smoking party, Riddel drew his chair alongside Beaulieu's, and opened a chat with him. First of all, Riddel told the handsome Beaulieu, that there was no doubt that he had been taken for Fitz-Gubin, and that he certainly would be stabbed instead of him if he did not take care. He reminded him of Fitz-Gubin's previous adventure.

"He is such a deuced mysterious fellow!" continued Riddel. "If he would tell one what he was about, one might be warned. But there is no knowing all that fellow's mysteries. . . . . By Jove, there he goes on shore now, in plain clothes!"

Sure enough, the long figure of Fitz-Gubin was seen gliding up the companion ladder, and in a few minutes the young men saw through an open port a boat shooting away towards the landing-place.

Beaulieu had much of the shrewdness and elegance, and much of the personal tastes of his father the admiral, and his grandfather the admiral's Parent. (Let us dignify the great progenitor of the Beaulieus with a capital, at all events.)

"Well," said Beaulieu, "it is very convenient to make love personally and get stabbed for it—by proxy!"

"Do you know," said Riddel—who was a trifle feather-headed, and flew backwards and forwards between facts, as a bird does between trees, undecided where to light—"the case must stand thus:—Your assailant was the cad of the fairway-buoy, who . . . . but then *you* were not of that party. But, stop. He wanted to get at Fitz-Gubin; and I suppose he is the brother of some girl that Fitz-Gubin has been making love to."

"And I am to be sacrificed to her, like a lamb to Venus!" said Mr. Beaulieu.

"He will get himself into some terrible scrape," Riddel went on. "For my part, I hate your adventures, and watchings, and knives, and rope-ladders, in such matters."

"You are of Horace's opinion," said Beaulieu, who thought that a "gentleman" ought to know Horace, and only studied certain authors whom he thought a "gentleman" ought to know, besides him. "*Amo Venerem facilem*," &c.

"I am glad Horace and I agree," said Riddel. "But, by Jove, too (he went on expounding the half-moral-code which he and many other young fellows hold in our day)—"by Jove, I say, it is not fair to be always following up a chase of this kind like a red Indian on a track. Hang it, if an apple drops into one's mouth, well and good; but don't go sneaking like a burglar over the orchard wall." Whereupon Riddel, feeling that he had made an ethical hit, sucked some sherry-and-water, and hugged himself as a good fellow.

"There is a great deal of sound English feeling about that sentiment," said Beaulieu, with a grin. "Let us take a turn on deck."

They left the main-deck, and found the night lovely. They mounted to the poop, and commenced a pleasant turn there. The stars were out in the heaven, and the winds loose upon the sea.

"Who's that on the other side?" asked Riddel. He spoke of a figure which was leaning over the side of the bulwarks, and looking towards the shore.

Riddel strolled over to see. The figure did not move. He returned, and told Beaulieu, it was Forbessy.

"Ah, a quiet and rather melancholy fellow," Beaulieu remarked, as they leaned over the bulwarks of their side. "Never saw him till he joined a few weeks ago. Seems of a good family, and not rich; affectionate, but without chums; earnest, with no particular beliefs; and clever, without having decided what he will make his cleverness do!"

"Why, Beaulieu, what an infernal observer you are," Riddel said, with an astonished air. "I scarcely ever saw you speak to Forbessy."

Beaulieu laughed, looked down at the water, and said nothing.

"I tell you what I remark," Riddel went on, sharpened by Beaulieu's example, "Forbessy and Fitz-Gubin never speak to each other, now I think of it."

"Let us come over and see what Forbessy's about," said Beaulieu.

"Do you know that 'attempted assassination,' as the papers would call it, has made me curious about one or two things."

They moved across the poop as he suggested. Forbessy was leaning in the same place still, and watching the line of shore. In the tranquillity of the night, the harbour and the town, seen from the *Sovereign's* high poop, seemed to hang like a curtain spangled with lights. Lights shifted to and fro, and played in and out—from houses, along the water's edge—from boats. It was the picture, perhaps, that Forbessy was so interested in; the picture of that stillness pierced by those lights, under such a sweet sky, and full of so many associations.

Forbessy turned, as the young men joined him. "What a fine night it is," he said.

"You seem interested in the look of the town to-night," said Beaulieu, good-naturedly.

"I was looking at—at the town, in fact," replied our friend, rather vaguely. "What's the time, I wonder? About nine, I suppose; and this is the fourteenth."

"This is the fourteenth," Riddel answered, "I believe. I hope I shall hear from my aunt by next mail! And now I think of it, I shall go on shore this evening." So saying, Mr. Riddel (whose ideas had been set into a new train by the sudden reminiscence of his aunt) departed.

"Mr. Beaulieu," said Forbessy, turning round briskly to that gentleman, with whom he was now left alone, "I listened with interest to your story in the gun-room. Permit me to tell you that there *is* danger to be apprehended by you—as I clearly see from the circumstances which you recounted; as, in fact, I may say, I *know*."

"Indeed," Beaulieu said, in a quiet and composed way, "really there seems an unwonted degree of mystery and an unusual atmosphere of romance pervading H.M.S. *Sovereign* and Malta, just now."

"There is always more of both, everywhere, than people readily believe," Forbessy said. "But, Mr. Beaulieu," he continued, "I will open myself to you more frankly. We have not been long in company in the ship; nevertheless, I have seen enough of you to know that you are melancholy for want of definite convictions about life; friendly, without having confidants; and, but the rest might sound like flattery, suffice it to say that the rest gives interest to the other phenomena I have observed!"

"Why," said Beaulieu, "you echo the very remarks which I made not half an hour ago about yourself."

"Nature, then, intended us to be friends," said Forbessy.

"So be it," said Beaulieu.

As they walked together for half an hour in the moonlight, arm and arm, Forbessy told Beaulieu a story which interested him a good deal. What is needful for us to know of it, we shall know at the proper time. Meanwhile I would just say *à propos* of the eternal question of the age and its reforms—might we not, considering the many editions of the *De Amicitia* which we possess, and by way of doing a little instalment towards reform of a more profound sort than giving expression to the enlightened wisdom of "ten-pound householders"—might we

not, I say, achieve a little stroke of "reform" by privately worshipping and recognising more than we do, the antique sacredness of the sentiment of friendship?

CHAPTER VIII.

THERE was a rumour spread about the circles of the *Sovereign* (for is not a line-of-battle ship a kind of town, and with as many degrees and circles in it as any town of them all?) that Lord Fitz-Gubin had "got leave," and was going over to Sicily to shoot. He encouraged, however, no curiosity that anybody might feel on the subject. In fact, he withdrew himself more than ever from society in the *Sovereign*. He kept his watch, dined—when he did not dine on shore—at mess, and kept up, to be sure, an acquaintance with Riddel, Siddlington, and others, and used Cuckles, but slight was the intimacy which any of them attained with him. If Siddlington had ever formed a vision of himself as a guest at Castellan, and a successful wooer of a Lady Eleanora there, Siddlington must, by the time at which we have now arrived, have seen that it was a vision indeed. Other Jacobs, whose dreams had revealed to them ladders up to high life, had awakened too. The impenetrable, selfish easiness, and mysterious and solitary, yet commonplace nature of Fitz-Gubin, kept everybody off. Nay, a party actually formed to quiz him! One or two men used to try to draw him out by hypocritical devices, encouraging the immense latent pride of the man to show itself; teasing him as you might tease a tortoise, and, perhaps, by a sudden turn toppling him over on his back, and leaving him helpless! For one of these conventional gentlemen, once out of the protection of social convention, rudely brought in contact with nature, is as helpless as a tortoise in that position. Jigger once seeing him with a collar of unrivalled finish and stiffness, exclaimed, in his fine bluff way, "Well, d—n it, Fitz-Gubin, nothing *does* so take in the public as an imposing gill!" Fitz-Gubin turned as pale as death! Another time the conversation was led to the subject of expensive living in messes. Fitz-Gubin wondered, after some careful drawing-out from our wicked clique, "how the deuce some fellows managed to live in the service, now-a-days." By-and-by, in a moment of farther encouragement, he said that "he would be worse off with two hundred a-year than others with a third of it, having his rank to keep up," and so forth. But he was very knowing in his way, and had once or twice seen glances pass between men which he did not like. Beaulieu (the villain) who was "up" to the facts about the connection of the Fitz-Gubins with Picardy, showed an inclination to hint at *that* old story one day, and it was all Forbessy could do to keep him off the dangerous ground. Latterly, however, Forbessy and Beaulieu, still more together than ever, put themselves less and less in Fitz-Gubin's way. Such was the state of things when the above-mentioned rumour about his shooting expedition got wind.

The intimacy between Forbessy and Beaulieu caused a good deal of

curiosity among the gentlemen of the *Sovereign*. What would a mess be without those combinations and antipathies, those personal likes and dislikes, which divide its society, and gives piquancy to its daily life? A large mess is like a town, and its society includes as many conflicting elements. Often there is an intrigue going forward—a mystery slowly evolving itself—of which numbers of those who breakfast and dine together day after day, never have a suspicion. Poor Charley Wremond dies, and we learn that he had run away with a ward in chancery, and had a family of little ones of whose existence we never dreamed. No wonder, Charley was wont to be serious at times when we were piqued at his being "slow?" Jack Montacute is going to fight a duel with Sandwich the next port we come to; but they must dine together meanwhile, and nobody must guess that there is anything of the kind meditated between them. What made Bellomont so friendly with Tangueray? He was his natural brother, my dear sir; hence the peculiar felicity of Bung's constant joke about the likeness between them! Yes, romance underlies us everywhere in society, as the mystery of life underlies the fair city and country life we mingle in, and the existence we enjoy; to both, however, the fool (to his gain, and also to his loss) is blind and deaf.

Forbessy and Beaulieu are sitting at the stern-ports of the gun-room early in the morning. It is near the hour for taking a shore-boat to Bighi Bay to bathe. A marine is cleaning Fitz-Gubin's gun; an operation watched with interest by one or two men who happened to be up as early as our friends. He performs the operation in their presence, and in the mess-room; for, of course, they must take an interest in anything belonging to so notable a man.

Latimer watches the process; remarks that he thinks Fitz-Gubin will have a fine time of it, and, by-the-by, where is he going to shoot? Is he going to Sicily, or where?

Forbessy looked at Beaulieu in that d——d mysterious way (I borrow this expression from Latimer), in which these gentlemen occasionally interchanged glances. They rose presently, and made for the door.

"Going to bathe?" Latimer called out. Beaulieu waved a towel in his hand, by way of answer; and in a minute they were in a shore-boat. Out glided the heavy green and yellow boat, with awning spread, from the *Sovereign's* side towards the harbour's mouth—the faithful Maltese (for the Maltese is among the most devoted and obedient of mankind when kindly treated) rising and falling as he plied the oars, industrious and contented. "Bighi, sir?" he asks. "Yes, Jocko," says Beaulieu, good-naturedly enough (for B. is a gentleman in all ways), but with the same kindness with which he would give an apple to a monkey; for B. is an Englishman, dealing with a subject of another race.

Forbessy and Beaulieu said little at first. The morning was opening up into a fine day. They were content to see the forts relieve with their deep hues the blue monotony of the sea—the life spreading itself along the harbour's edges—the stately masts of the few men-of-war in harbour tapering away into the sky—and to let the picture sink

into their minds in peace. The boat with a heavy motion drew farther and farther out, and the Maltese brushed away his curly hair, and paused a moment.

"That's her!" said Forbessy, suddenly.

Beaulieu looked up, and saw in the line of the pointed finger a merchant brig lying. There was nothing peculiar in her appearance to distinguish her from any *Annie Jane* or *Isabella Briggs* sent out by our country.

"Row to the brig," said Beaulieu to their boatman, pointing to her. The Maltese obeyed, and soon brought them close to her. A head popped over the side with no very welcome expression and said, "What d'ye want, master?"

"Go alongside," said Forbessy to the Maltese, and without giving the head any answer; up jumped Beaulieu, up jumped Forbessy, and stood on the brig's deck. The head—which was no less a head than a skipper's—was set on a short little carcase. The skipper was no way pleased to see his visitors, but, with hands in pockets, looked up at them inquiringly.

"You take passengers," said Beaulieu, glancing round with a cool air of observation.

"There you're wrong," said the short skipper briefly.

"You never take passengers—eh?" asked Beaulieu.

"There you're wrong again," said the little skipper.

"Your ears are longer than your tongue, I think, my good man," said Beaulieu, ineffably cool, and with the "great air" which he knew how to put on. "But waiving any attempts at epigram which are ludicrously unsuited to your social position, suppose you show us your cabin?"

"We come from the *Sovereign*, I may mention," put in Forbessy, carelessly.

"Oh!" The little skipper began looking round, and assuming a very knowing expression—"Friends of Lord Fitz-Gubin's, I see!"

The eyes of our friends met instanter.

"So far so good," said Beaulieu, enigmatically. "Let us see the cabin, then."

The skipper paused. "Did you say friends of Lord Fitz-Gubin's, sir?" asked the skipper.

"Skipper!" said Beaulieu—"I did not say so. Permit me, however, to make it plain that we must see your cabin. Why, I ought not to explain: I may want a passage. If you wish me to say more, I have more to say; but I will be content with a look at your cabin."

"The skipper hesitated, but he yielded. They followed him down his cabin ladder.

"There, now, gentlemen, Lord Fitz-Gubin's taken that berth; that I s'pose you know."

There was nothing specially curious about the place destined to receive Fitz-Gubin. It was not so luxurious as one would suppose Fitz-Gubin would wish it to be. They looked at it and paused. The skipper seemed puzzled and uneasy, and watched them.

"When do you sail?" asked Beaulieu, abruptly.

"I think to-night."

"Well," said Beaulieu, suddenly becoming quite free-and-easy in his manner, "I dare say Fitz-Gubin will have a nice passage of it. A devilish pleasant cabin you have. He dines with you, no doubt—finds his own wine—takes the run of your prog—and will have a fowl occasionally, if the hen-coops are not washed overboard. We need not wait, I think," said Beaulieu, with a twinkle of his eye at Forbessy.

The skipper brightened up, and a weight seemed taken off his mind.

"Skipper!" said Beaulieu, fixing his eyes upon him with a look like a rapier thrust, "where do you stow lady passengers?"

The little man gave a start back. He was so manifestly upset that there was no concealing it. "Who are you, sir?" he said, "and what do you want with me? That's what I want to know."

"My good man, I am an officer in her Majesty's service, who takes some interest in the brig *Victor*. You must have seen that I know what I am about, and am not to be trifled with. First, you must show me the cabin taken for a young lady some weeks ago; second, you had better say nothing about this visit; third, you had better sail at your appointed time, and not mind about all your passengers being on board: you know whom you expect first!"

The skipper made no resistance nor remonstrance. He showed them into the cabin. Forbessy came with Beaulieu to the door of it. Truly it was a snug little nest—with a snow-white little crib—wherein a fairy might nestle, and be lulled by the murmur of the sea. Forbessy peeped in in silence, and turned away with a sigh. Beaulieu moved away, drawing the skipper by the arm; in that instant Forbessy slipped a letter under the pillow.

As they got on deck, Beaulieu gave his card to the skipper, and said —"Some day I may do you a turn, if you behave yourself; meanwhile, good morning!" But the little man expressed no cordial wish that they should ever meet again: they saw his head at the gangway as they were rowed away watching them, unmoved, till it dwindled to a speck.

Meanwhile breakfast was laid in the gun-room. Up from the cockpit came the fellows of the mess. Here was lively Riddel, polite Siddlington, artful Cuckles, Latimer the simple, and Manton the gruff, with many more. Rasper, the steward's assistant, brings endless eggs; Riddel, the extravagant, orders wine. Now is the hour for reminiscences of last night, and endless varieties of squadron news. Now glide away, with various expressions of face, the infinite varieties also of the *Genus* Dun. Pallid but pertinacious Tosta, eager and pimpled Sarjan, humorous but inflexible Baldero, you have been dodging about the cockpits the last hour; it is now time for you to go. Most implicitly do I believe you when you say you will call to-morrow!

The eggs, the squadron, the duns are discussed together. "Gad! I dreamed last night I paid Baldero!" said a youngster, chipping his egg.

You fellows *affect* duns," said Riddel. "You think it fine to be

dunned. Mark me, lads, the day will come when the fun will vanish out of these bills, and leave a balance you won't like!"

Everybody is impressed, for everybody feels that the speaker ought to know.

But at this moment—enter Fitz-Gubin. Forbessy and Beaulieu both look at him. You might see Forbessy's lip quiver if you cared to watch him. Fitz-Gubin is in mufti—bran-new semi-sporting rig. He is a little pale; but this may be our fancy, who have been peeping at his secrets; yes, he *is* a little pale, and has a more serious expression than usual. He takes his usual seat up among the leading seniors, with the usual quiet mechanical air of superiority, and the steward (whose aristocratic predilections are well known) attends to him in person. Fitz-Gubin eats an egg, consumes toast, drinks a cup of tea; then remarks, that the day seems fine, and wonders whether the breeze will hold.

Fitz-Gubin threw out a remark occasionally to an audience, as one scatters crumbs to birds, with a careless good-nature that seemed to say, "Eat, and be filled." Cuckles hastened to observe, that the day was fine, and to hope that the breeze would hold.

"Think of going to-day?" called out Beaulieu. Fitz-Gubin did not hear him. Beaulieu kept his eye fixed in a somewhat impressive manner on him; so Cuckles, fearing mischief, called his attention to Mr. Beaulieu.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Beaulieu?" Fitz-Gubin's manner was indeed tremendous in its politeness. Bung was awed, and tried to imitate the style afterwards, at the grog-tub.

"Are you going to-day?" repeated Beaulieu.

"Perhaps so. My intentions are not quite definite." . . . Bung was lost in admiration; Cuckles felt himself elevated.

Beaulieu said no more at that moment, and Cuckles and others doubted not that he felt himself rebuked. And so breakfast passed off, and men dispersed.

Breakfast once well over, our friends Forbessy and Beaulieu disappeared. We, however, who know what they are about, will follow them on shore. They march briskly through the several streets, and pause at a place where horses are to be had. All the way along Forbessy had been serious, not to say gloomy. He has carried on a kind of monologue, to which Beaulieu has listened with the faithful patience of a friend.

"There," says Forbessy, "there was the street. That was the church. A church, by the bye, which is an emblem of all Europe; for over the graves of dead earnestness and greatness, populace gather, and boobies prate. [I saw —— Bagman, Esq., there with a party one morning, making notes for an anti-superstitious harangue, and grinning in pitiable idiocy, and with perfect ignorance, over the graves of the knights.] Some day I may tell you all that has passsed in my head and heart since I took part in this little drama, of which the catastrophe approaches. Beaulieu, my dear fellow, you shall see her to-day!"

CHAPTER IX.

THEY were now cantering through the gates, past the fortifications, with their green turf and their solid stone, which form the hem of the garment of that sea-damsel, Valetta. Before them lies the stony landscape, which we described the other day, basking in mild autumn hues. They turn into a narrow road, and make for an unfrequented village. A dog barks; some children rush out; a crone, reposing under the shadow of a little chapel, wakes up, and stares, and grasps her crutch. But, in a moment, she slumbers again, as quietly as the dry and dusty trees which front a small row of little white houses; as quaintly, too, as yonder wooden saint perched up, in a box with glass windows, at the corner.

"Why, the whole village is asleep," exclaimed Forbessy. Indeed, it looked like it. But Forbessy, riding close up to the windows of a house, tapped with the butt-end of his whip at them. A sleepy and also woolly head appeared there, staring as if still in a dream, then vanished, and out from the door appeared a Maltese, and proceeded to offer his services to hold the horses. They dismounted. Beaulieu took Forbessy's arm, resigning himself to his command, and they strolled through the little place enjoying the afternoon air. The houses forming the village were grouped together so fantastically, and without order; trees shooting up amongst them; bits of garden dividing them, with an effect so careless and unsystematic, that you might fancy that the whole had been scattered by the hand of a flying deity *en route* to Greece. The chapel had somehow got planted in the centre, and seemed to hold itself up as an ensign for the houses to rally round. There *was* a time when the chapel was that everywhere.

"This village," said Forbessy, taking a firmer clasp of his friend's arm, "enjoyed some patronage during the days of the order. The knights came out here occasionally as a change: some of them had houses here. In this little place, for instance, I recognise the relics of a gentleman's dwelling."

So saying, Forbessy opened a garden gate, and followed by his friend marched in. The house stood apart from the village, and had, indeed, an air, even in decay, of former better fortune. The garden still boasted trees of orange and of almond. And among the wild grass, which sprang up rank over the ruins of a wall, there were fragments of stone of which the carved and shapely proportions indicated that they had formed part of structures, when the occupiers loved beauty.

"By Annabel!" said Beaulieu, rather affectedly, "a pleasant place enough! One sometimes fancies one could live in such places, and be very virtuous and romantic; but one comes back to civilization and milk punch."

"Yes," said Forbessy, "couldn't one lie on the grass with a pipe in one's mouth, and hear the *Castle of Indolence* read by—somebody. But here she comes!"

As he spoke, the door opened; the porch, overgrown with roses, which were waving, and falling in heaps, vibrated. A little boy came skipping out, ran up to Forbessy with perfect familiarity, and hailed him as "Missa Forbessy" most intimately.

Forbessy lifted him up and played with him, to the immense amusement of Beaulieu. "Marie come directly," said the youngster.

"Who asked you about Marie, *enfant terrible?*" Forbessy said. Beaulieu smiled, and admired the fatherly air of Forbessy, who made himself at home, and produced from his pocket, certain *dulciaria* for the juvenile, quite like a veteran.

The door opened again. This time, there appeared in the garden a little thin old man in black, with a skull-cap on. What linen was visible on the old gentleman was not very clean, and time had played havoc with his teeth. But his head was good; his face was the peasant face, tempered by the priestly position, and by drilling since boyhood, the common priest-face of Malta.

"Father Simola, my friend Mr. Beaulieu," said Forbessy.

Father Simola was very polite. Father Simola had acquired English. He looked at Beaulieu, and then he said, rubbing his hands together, "Is your friend from Lancashire like yourself?"

"No," said Forbessy. "No, Father Simola. He wants to know if you are one of the—— but never mind," he continued, rather abruptly. Forbessy treated the father with a great deal of good-natured courtesy, though the old gentleman made but a small figure in conversation; was, indeed, the ordinary, unromantic priest of the lower orders, and up to the calibre of the little chapel.

More arrivals. Two or three more younkers, among whom at last sailed out our young friend Marie Polonai. Beaulieu was all eyes; he had never seen her before, and when he first found her one of their group, and standing tranquilly before Forbessy and the Father, he scarcely knew what to say; she was so much more beautiful, so very superior in all ways to his anticipations. Forbessy, who had shaken hands with her in a brotherly manner, when she first appeared in the garden, presented Beaulieu to her. Beaulieu was struck by nothing so much (not even by her eyes, which were miraculous, and which I should despair of describing) as by the utter naturalness of her manner. This was what delighted all competent observers, in Marie Polonai. She was as natural as a rose, if I may be permitted such a comparison; that is, she always was equally delightful; equally in her place, singing, talking, running, dancing; all her actions flowed from a central beauty of which they partook, and while you wondered at her perfection, and strove to account for it, you found criticism to merge at last into mere assent, and were contented with the fact without puzzling yourself with the "why."

The youngsters brought seats. They sat down, and tranquilly basked in the afternoon, of which Forbessy seemed to cherish every passing moment. The wind blew a few rose-leaves from the mass at the porch, which scattered themselves all over Marie, and fell about her.

"Oh! that wind," said Forbessy. "I hate the wind! It carries

away good fellows like Beaulieu and me from all we love; sailors are its slaves. It does the evil work of autumn, for it carries the flowers and leaves away long before autumn has altogether ruined them, and while they are first tinged with a new beauty by it. It is going to take Marie away, as it has just done the roses!"

"Yes. But the wind that takes me can, by-and-by, bring you," said Marie, in a low voice.

Forbessy looked up at her, but said nothing.

"How glad your father will be to see you, Marie," said Father Simola, simply.

"He will. He is to take me to Naples. I am to learn to sing. The ladies Wyoming say that I already sing like an angel."

"These ladies," said Father Simola, alluding with severity to their plans of conversion, "are not good ladies."

"They are very kind. They wished me to begin a new worship, it is true. I told them worship is worship, and belongs to the heart. I cannot argue, but, already, if I am good, I know how to pray. Every day, after I have seen them, I have seen Father Simola; he can argue; and I have known him since a little girl; but the ladies Wyoming will not see Father Simola!"

Beaulieu smiled. "You are a good girl," said Father Simola.

The little boy came running up, and laughing and shouting. Something new was evidently about to begin. And Beaulieu looking up, saw a party of Maltese approaching. Forbessy and the others were to receive them. Forbessy shook hands with one or two, and Beaulieu observed that they all treated him with great respect, and seemed to know him quite well. Beaulieu felt the scene new, and as he strolled about the garden, fancied himself a *seigneur* presiding at the festival of his peasantry.

"But, my good fellow," said Beaulieu, recognising a face which he had seen before, "surely you and I have met somewhere? If I mistake not, it was on an occasion when you wanted me to taste your knife!"

The Maltese smiled and bowed very low. "Pardon me, sar—I think it was!" Then, again taking off his cap and bowing very low indeed, he twisted round and shot away to another part of the garden.

Beaulieu stood watching them. Father Simola, who drew near, said—"They all adore Marie!—she is the pride of their whole neighhourhood, she is so kind and good; she is so modest and gifted,—they would kill any one who they thought would insult her. And so the old *padre* rattled on about the gifts and graces of the girl, and the worship of her by the Maltese. Some of them had formed a band of worshippers, and were pledged to guard her, and so forth.

But the afternoon was wearing away. The pale rose-coloured fire was already spreading itself over the west. It was time to go. Beaulieu was conducted with many demonstrations of politeness to his horse; Forbessy lingered a few minutes, and then followed. Waving his whip to Beaulieu, he motioned him to follow at a gallop; and for many minutes they clattered on in silence. At last Forbessy pulled up and began to talk before any questions were asked him:—

"A strange episode—Eh? You observed how much alone I was, and how much occupied by unshared thoughts, till you and I *discovered* each other, as I may justly call it? Accident threw me in the way of that charming being. I made acquaintance with her family, chiefly by favour of that old priest, whom—but no matter at present about my relation to him. I was interested by her genius; for it is genius which gives that air of superiority to her manner, and which raises it above her birth. She will be a great artist; and I hope the world will never spoil her. Well, I almost immediately discovered the designs of our gentleman from Picardy, and for weeks I have amused myself by counteracting them—keeping him from possibly coming in contact with her, just as a gardener would keep a slug or caterpillar from his flowers. The gentleman from Picardy (by Jove! I could give you a capital history of the Fitz-Gubins. Ours was one of the families which their patriarch Gubbins managed to manœuvre out of ——shire) saw Marie once at night in Valetta, and once at the Wyomings, who patronized her as a barn-door fowl might patronise a nightingale. He put *you* in danger by haunting her dwelling at all hours; but never saw her again. He sent her letters, which she handed over to old Simola, who used to burn them with much ceremony, and cross himself afterwards. And [here Forbessy laughed] he employed what he calls 'a cad' to convey those epistles, who, by way of keeping up a lucrative employment, got somebody to write answers; and Fitz-Gubin lived in the conviction that he was encouraged. He sent her bracelets and a locket; and I am sorry to say that old Simola sent these off yesterday to the Wyomings, for their friend, the 'Lord Fizzgubing,' as he calls him. This I did not know in time to prevent it, which I would have done for their sakes. The final step you already know, viz., that having learned the how and when of the girl's departure, he got leave to go for a trip, and took a cabin in the *Victor*—a fact of which she has no knowledge—intending to give her a delightful surprise, and have a pleasant cruise as the irresistible Fitz-Gubin!"

"Upon my word, a devilish pleasant programme!" said Beaulieu.

"A word of this ntoable scheme would have caused some friends of Marie's to do what would have stopped Fitz-Gubin's career, perhaps, finally; but then the service is to be considered. No; we must stop him ourselves. I owe that 'great family' a grudge, and shan't be sorry to punish him.

Little does the solid BULDER think what plots are being plotted, what a secret life is transacting itself under the brilliant surface of his lighted saloons this autumn night! Let us be thankful that we do not see society as the microscope shows us a bright drop of water, with ugly objects preying on each other in its heart! Let us be thankful for its apparent brightness and purity, and topple it off *without* applying the microscope—at least, without applying it always. Pass on, stout Mr. Bulder, thou art a good-natured, hospitable old gentleman, happy among thy guests, not devoured by secret anxieties, nor bored by those whom thou entertainest. Glance at Lady Ostrich the beautiful; is she not happy? Is not everybody happy here? Listen to the music—the

embodiment of luxury and romance—is it produced by a band who hate the party for taking them away from their pipes at the canteen? Has the apparent happiness a secret fact lurking under its production, like that fact about the music? It may be so. But *carpe diem*. Wine will give you a headache; but, if you do not take wine, you may yet have a headache to-morrow.

Beaulieu and Forbessy were both dancing. Beaulieu always danced; it pleased the people of the house, and, after all, did not bore him much. But regularly, as each quadrille was over, he and Forbessy glided together. Never, for any length of time, did they lose sight of Fitz-Gubin. The Wyomings were there; but Fitz-Gubin did not dance, and avoided them. His eyes once met Forbessy's, but no sign of recognition passed; but Forbessy and Beaulieu remarked how easily he carried himself—how well he hid under his calm exterior the secret excitement which must have been at his heart.

Forbessy grew restless. Beaulieu again and again soothed him. So long as Fitz-Gubin remained in the room (as he urged), all was well. Presently, Beaulieu approached Forbessy, and whispered to him, "Come."

When they stood outside on the landing-place, Beaulieu said, "A man of the —— gives a supper at the hotel ——. Fitz-Gubin is to be there. I have got myself and you asked, at the last moment. Fitz-Gubin is evidently to start from there. I met Siddlington, just now, and drew from him, carelessly, that he had formally begun his leave, and left the *Sovereign*. So let us off to the hotel, and manage the affair as quietly as you can."

They were the last arrivals. The party consisted of some fifteen men. As they entered the room, Fitz-Gubin was talking away; and, though we know that he had himself under tolerable control, he did not look pleased when he saw our friends enter. They were the only men of the *Sovereign* present, and just the two men of the *Sovereign* whom he least knew, or least cared to meet.

"Mr. Beaulieu, and Mr. Forbessy," said the good-natured host, "messmates of Fitz-Gubin's, I think; this way! Will you begin with a quail? What wine, Beaulieu? Fitz-Gubin, you don't drink!"

They sat down; some gentlemen had begun to drink evidently pretty early. Wine of the best sorts was plentiful enough: the supper comprised all that Malta can afford; and Malta is not poor in that department. Bones from the funeral pyres of gallant turkeys (*ossa perusta*, a Latin poet would call them) came up in quick relays; the pleasant quail on his bed of toast; the piquant beccafico who nourishes his fine soul on the romantic fig, awaited the appetite and excited to wine; while for the mere sentimental dawdler, fruit and liqueurs offered their voluptuous charms. When you had exhausted every sense of the palate, you could still seek coolness and forgetfulness in some iced punch—punch as attractive and exciting as the eyes of houris.

There was a great deal of drinking. Two or three fellows early babbled, and became merely bores. Forbessy drank, too; but the pre-occupation of his mind kept him from being overcome; wine

only strung up and sharpened his faculties, and intensified his sense of past, present, and future. The conversation (when the two or three babblers fell asleep) became fixed among a few, and the rest listened.

"But come, Fitz-Gubin—come; about this last adventure, you know! You were shaying?" began a young gentleman, whose hair was fast getting into his eyes.

"Fitz-Gubin, you don't drink!" said the host.

"Your last, what d'ye call it, ye know?" continued the speaker.

"Oh, nothing very extraordinary!" said Fitz-Gubin, with an intolerably conceited manner. "I'm an old stager. When I was in South America,—ah, never mind! Poor little Madeline!"

"Wouldn't she have you, then?" called out Beaulieu.

Fitz-Gubin did not take any notice of him. Beaulieu, who was drinking pretty hard, poured some moselle into his tumbler, and drank it off.

"About Madeline?" called out Beaulieu, very loudly.

"No—no; about the new one. I say, Fitz-Gubin, let us hear about her. Are her eyes blue?" asked the first speaker, with a determined and most serious air.

"No; charming dark eyes; nice as the Spanish girls."

"Sit down, Forbessy, for God's sake; and wait a little!" whispered Beaulieu, for Forbessy was turning pale, and very serious.

"Oh, hang dark eyes; give me blue eyes!" said the aforesaid young gentleman, looking round, with an imbecile expression.

"Fitz-Gubin, you don't drink!" said the host, once more.

"I mustn't drink: I'm going to sail at daylight."

"Sail at daylight?" inquired somebody.

"Gentlemen," cried Beaulieu; "fill your glasses."

The roar with which he said this, accompanied by a thump which made all the glasses ring, startled the whole table. Wine, punch, all conceivable liquors were poured out, sherry by some into champagne, and brandy by some into sherry, as the mad genius of the hour dictated. Beaulieu stood up, with a tumbler full to the brim of wine, balancing himself with a slight lurch. "Gentlemen, I propose a toast, I propose one of the most beautiful and innocent creatures God ever made!" Here there was an immense noise, with wild outcries, and the crashing of glass. "The man who does not drink it shall rue the hour. Gentlemen, Marie Polonai! Forbessy, return thanks!"

"Marie Polonai!" screamed a dozen voices, and again there was a noise which shook the room. "Who is she?" called out several men. "Forbessy," roared others.

Fitz-Gubin had started to his feet, like a man shot in the heart, and stood up speechless and pale with surprise. Forbessy had done the same, and, as the noise died away, the two stood there facing each other; men sober enough to judge saw that in the look of the two faces, as they met, there was deadly mischief.

"Do you drink that toast, Lord Fitz-Gubin?" Forbessy asked.

"I drink it! You surprise me, sir, by asking me about any proceeding of mine. Captain Bechamel—thank you for your hospitality: it is late, and I must bid you good night."

"Lord Fitz-Gubin, you leave not this room to sail in the *Victor*: mark me, to sail in the *Victor*, I say! If you are such a craven as ——"

This was the one thing needed to make the scene complete. Like a handful of powder falling on a fire, the room went into a blaze. Noises of every kind caused a scene of extreme confusion. Fitz-Gubin lost himself in spite of his caution; there were fatal words, and a scuffle.

"Now," said Captain Bechamel, "nothing remains but to separate for the evening, and postpone all necessary ulterior proceedings till the proper time. After what has passed, of course, Lord Fitz-Gubin will see the propriety of remaining in Malta till the matter has come to its proper termination."

* * * * * *

The next day after this scene, the mail from England arrived, with (among other novelties) Fitz-Gubin's promotion to the rank of lieutenant. This brought a new element into the matter. Explanations—memoranda—notes—recapitulations, and botherations of all kinds passed between the parties in the quarrel and their representatives. Finally, everybody was "satisfied." But to this hour it is the opinion of Fitz-Gubin that Malta is a d—d hole!

JACK'S CHRISTMAS ASHORE.

Let us fancy that it is a winter night in the English channel. Dark sky and dark sea are bound together by sheets of wet mist. The ships "dodge" slowly along, with their anchors pendulating "a cockbill," ready to let go at a moment's notice; muskets flash from their bows occasionally, or bells wail through the darkness. The look-out men peer from the cat-heads as if they were expecting to see ghosts. It is a night when it behoves a skipper, captain, or master, to have his faculties about him; when you congratulate yourself on knowing the channel, on being familiar with every light—flashing, revolving, or stationary—along the coast. Your homely "lead" is then worth his weight in a nobler metal. "Watch there! watch!" echoes along the ship's side, as plash goes the traveller; the reel creaks, and in a few minutes the dead mis-shapen thing is hauled up again, and by the light of the lantern tells his tale. "Sand and shells" is the news your mute friend has brought you from the bottom, far below. And you know you are in the "fairway." Pleasant to reflect on: is it not? that this graceful and ornamental path is the safest one, too,—that shell, strewn by kind nature, is your journey—Home!

Let us fancy, also, that H.M.S. *Cleopatra* is looming through the fog with the other vessels. Her commission is over. She will be paid off "before Christmas," everybody says. In a week or two, that band of countrymen, who have lived together for three long years, will be

scattered never to reunite. Jack will be in Denmark in the spring, just as Tom is on his way to the Pacific; and Harry is going on a whaling-cruise. Years hence, little Pipp, the midshipman, will meet little Ripp, his fellow-youngster, when both have grown brown-bearded and sententious; and they will talk about the "old *Cleopatra*," and count over the fellows who have died since she was paid off. Captain Rigg will be of that number; he cannot hope to live long enough, either, to be an admiral. Nay, the *Cleopatra* herself is doomed to a violent death. For it is down in the books of destiny that Captain Pink shall have that vessel (after his marriage with the Honourable Miss——), and that she (the ship, of course) shall thump ashore in the Mozambique channel; on which occasion, these very planks on which you and I—oh, messmate!—have drank to each other (in moderation) so often, will be scattered on the waters and parted for ever. Such are our philosophical reflections in the middle watch, this misty night, at all events—for the coffee-boiling machine has gone wrong as usual, and we have dozed once or twice while walking about the lee-side of the deck, and woke up by knocking our shins against the carronade slides; and the lieutenant of our watch is sulky, and a whole winter is rushing from the main-sail just along our peculiar "beat." Courage, however. England is lying in that impervious darkness to leeward, as snug as the compass lies in the binnacle aft yonder. We shall see England to-morrow morning at breakfast-time, and shall pass our Christmas ashore this year.

When we arrive at our native shore, when those chalk cliffs that rose on the horizon in the morning, as white as our juvenile hopes in the distance, have become distinctly near us, our country gives us no very romantic welcome. On the contrary, she sends a custom-house functionary on board us at once. He receives us with outstretched hand—open for our money! The custom-house functionary remains on board in the enjoyment of the midshipmen's hospitality a good deal. He is not a man of polished manners; he is eminently convivial, however. He takes his grog with us of an evening, and remarks on the superiority of her Majesty's rum. Pipp, and Ripp, and I, and other luminaries are very courteous to him; and he looks at our chests—well-bred Higsby!—with a decidedly polite air, and gracefully puts his mark on the same, and passes them ashore. And I know that Ripp can afford to give you a better cigar than any man in Rockshire; and I know that Pipp's sister (beautiful Adelinda!) has the most exquisite Chinese chessmen that their county ever saw. I respect Higsby!

The ship's books have to be made up. The pay-clerks come on board to pay off the men. One party of them agrees to go by a special steamer to London; and the manager of that expedition manages so well as to run the vessel on shore for them, which delays their arrival a whole night—much profit to the manager from the sale of spirits accruing in the interim! But let us not dwell on the troubles which at once swarm like evil elves round our friend Jack the moment he sets his foot out of the limits of discipline. Picture him as having arrived on shore, and having mounted a new hat—a spectacle replete with delight to the present writer—picture him setting off to his native

seaport, or wandering with a wild look round London, or lulled in epicurean repose, smoking a pipe and listening to a fiddler.

And now, how and where will our friends of the *Cleopatra* spend the Christmas which is marching to us through the snow? Are we not scattered over the British islands? For one dieth the goose of Westmoreland; for another gleam the berries of Cornwall; one skateth on the tarns of the north; another wandereth by the banks of the Serpentine. For a thousand days in succession did we dine together; and this day of all we are dining far away.

There is Captain Rigg, for example. Pipp met him near the dockyard two days after the ship was paid off—certain considerations detaining Pipp, till Pipp *senior* wrote to him. Was this

"The great Achilles, whom we knew?"

this plain old gentleman in a brown great-coat! Was "this the face that launched a thousand ships," as Marlow says; this the sturdy old sailor who got his lieutenancy at Trafalgar, whose voice awed the *Cleopatra?* He was strolling along in a white hat, rescued from a band-box to which it had been consigned when he hoisted his pendant, and in which it had lain during his commission. He was now the plain old half-pay captain, moving in quiet circles. But in vain did Pipp reflect on that circumstance; vainly he remembered Lieutenant Primby's sneering remark that "*Rigg would now find his level.*" He touched his hat when they met, with the old air of "proud submission" (for the youngest youngster will tell you that it is "to the Crown, sir; not —— in particular," that *he* touches his hat!) and Captain Rigg was very kindly in his manner, and desired to be remembered to Pipp's father. Well, the captain will spend his Christmas-day in the bosom of his family, in Nelson Cottage, P———, and have an old naval friend or two, and they will talk about "Who is to have the *Cockatoo,*" and the forthcoming trial of Jowler for losing the *Roarer.* And let us hope that he will have many happy returns of the day, before the time when he is delicately put on the retired list, to make room for other men to rise!

Then—how various the scenes where we shall all be! There is Lord Ruffles of our mess who goes off to Fossetfurk Castle, where the Earl of Frillsby is "entertaining a select circle." Ruffles's arrival will be chronicled in the county paper, which will dwell, too, on the known gallantry of that young officer.

Lespoon will warm his heart at a blazing fire in the cathedral town of Wincaster. He is to be married to Adela Pelby when he is promoted: at present he is a mate. His interest is not particularly good; for Colonel Lespoon, his elder brother, "deserted the Whig party during the Durham row," as Lespoon was wont to inform us. Pleasant is it not, O reader, to have the rise of thy honeymoon dependent—like that of one of Mr. Grieve's moons—on the machinery behind the scenes?

The appearance of young Ripp at their great overgrown and semi-baronial farm-house (the swallows build just over the armorial bearings on it) will excite immense delight there. They look on Ripp as des-

JACK ASHORE.—p. 120.

tined to raise an ancient (though decayed) family to its former glory. His father's favourite vision is the apparition of his son covered with honour—and with a wooden leg. He sticks out for a wooden leg—the old gentleman! I am convinced that mere honour without that addition—or substitution—would appear common-place to him. He has formed to himself gradually the idea that it is part of the duty of a naval hero to have one. He is conscious of but little change in the service; though he fears (with excellent reason) that it must be more expensive than it used to be. When he writes to Harry he invariably recalls to him some anecdote of Jervis or Benbow. He will make Harry wear his uniform, much to Harry's amusement, at his Christmas dinner-party; and will wonder that he sings nothing from Dibdin, but prefers a reminiscence of the *San Carlo*.

But when all our fellows are enjoying themselves in town and country—when Rigg, Lord Ruffles, Lespoon, and the others are, in their various ways, arriving pretty well, I suppose, at the same result of human jollity—let us not forget the boatswain! Somewhere or other, that officer, in a blue-tailed coat of miraculous construction, is celebrating the day. That the boatswain cares one farthing about a wassail-bowl—that he would esteem it anything but a "phantasm"—I do not believe. I believe him to consider holly a contemptible affectation. I believe him to consider ships' flags the only possible means of decoration, anywhere or anyhow. As to mistletoe—but that would be too absurd. I once was witness to a meeting, after a long absence, between a boatswain and his wife (you may call her a boatswain's mate, if you have the heart to make such a pun at this festive season).

It was at Malta. The steamer had just arrived from England—the steam was hissing away—the passengers bustling about. One dame, I suppose about five-and-thirty years of age, looked anxiously towards the boats that were flocking to the vessel. She was the wife of the boatswain of the *Kabob*. He had come out to the island eight years before; and now he had got a situation for life there, and had written to her to join him. They had not met for eight years! The look of this dame interested me. I was waiting for our letters. Presently came the boatswain on board. I did not know his mission; but I saw him peering eagerly about. I saw the dame catch sight of him—start a little—and remain still. She was puzzled.

The boatswain saw her—their eyes met. I watched them narrowly. Puzzled yet. They looked away for a minute—passed each other curiously—half afraid to look at each other much—quite unable to help looking at all—passed again. At last they stopped opposite each other; some old familiar expression dawned from the boatswain's face, I apprehend. "Tom!" "Sairey!"

Since I *heard* that meeting, reader, and remembering it at this moment, I incline to believe that the boatswain would extend his contempt to the mistletoe likewise; but I know that he will be jolly as well as the rest of us. Old Bilbores, late carpenter of the *Cleopatra*, and Coin, the gunner, will drop in; and the whole commission of that vessel will be talked over among them. About eight or so, the "crib,"—I use the word advisedly—in which these officers will then be par-

taking of grog, will be startled by the sound of music. The old boys look up, and their pipes start from their respective mouths. The boatswain starts from his seat, the others follow. They find the whole female population respectively belonging to them commencing a dance, which includes the "old 'ooman," the lady of the house and her daughter, whose eyes are black and whose gown is green, who protests against Bet, and hopelessly endeavours to make her father call her Elizabeth; who prevents his making pipe-lights of the Rev. Mr. Nibble's tracts; who takes the part of the "h'aristocracy," when he occasionally attacks that order; and who means to marry the young man who is so smartly dressed that he does not know what to do with himself, as soon as she pleases. The boatswain looks on with contempt for a while. In ten minutes, however, he is observed to roar out to the fiddler in a style which terrifies that performer. The fiddler, deserting a natural *penchant* for Italian music, which he is acoustomed to declare his true vocation, breaks wildly into a jig. It is all over with the boatswain now. He plunges into a jig too. The smart young man, who looks on him with that peculiar awe with which a possible father-in-law is regarded by reasonable people, is delighted with the spectacle; while Bet leans against the wall and roars at the old boy in a disgraceful manner. It is observable that a serious expression of countenance invariably attends the dancing of sailors, and forms a remarkable contarst to the extraordinary vivacity of their "steps," which to me always seem highly complicated too. A curious question occasionally haunts me. Who invented these combinations? Where do sailors learn them? I have seen the result, indeed; but the process of instruction strangely presents itself to me as something remarkable. Has a man, professionally known as nautical dancing-master, been visible in the neighbourhood—familiarly beheld by ordinary eyes? Is he grave or gay—a hasty or patient man? I confess to a longing to see the operation going on. Yet who knows? Rip Van Winkle saw Hudson and his men at their play, and the result was awful.

What notion—one can fancy the reader asking—and with what degree of definiteness, do sailors form of Christmas? He does not come to them as the mere impersonation which he presents to the dwellers on shore. He lays no white snow-wreath on the ocean like those which lie—even as flowers do on the corpse in a Greek funeral—on the bosom of the green country. Many a Christmas-day our friend must pass in countries where the name of Christ is only known to the sickly little missionary with the sun-brown face, whose family keep up a little Christian fire in the heart of the wilderness, which will burn brighter on that day when they season African luxuries with the memory of England! And in what religious light does the day present itself to him? Doubtless, he has seen—if his vessel has been in an English harbour on Christmas-day—a sprig of holly dangling from the little wooden pulpit when "church" is "rigged" on the main deck. Sitting on the capstan-bar, resting on the buckets, which constitute his remarkable pew, Jack contemplates this, and, combining the result with what he hears on the occasion, forms, we may imagine, some vague reverent idea of an awful act of hope and mercy done on a day like this,

long ago—before the last war, a long time (laugh not, reader!)—some act which the admiral of the fleet bows to! Surely, there is a beauty which should sweeten the whole year in this consideration—that the relation between man and man is for once in the twelvemonth, not one of command and obedience only—still less of hire and pay only (which is a meaner one),—that to-day, the Christ within us is born once more as the Christ who teaches us was—and that we are for once equal—by being for once higher!

But I must not get too serious. Jack, I say, has, we may imagine, some such impression as this. Nevertheless, as the impressive marriage service is succeeded by champagne, tittering, and the honeymoon—and, as in our grandfather's time, a Scotch funeral was followed by abundant (smuggled) claret—so to the said impression of Jack's, jollity instantly succeeds. The grog-tub is in the waist; young Bung, the master's assistant, is presiding there; the ship's goat, sniffing the aroma, comes pattering along the deck.

On shore, I am inclined to think that the Christmas of Jack, however, is a shade less jolly. It wants the force of contrast, you see. Far be it from me to say it is not jolly. But is it not possible that Jack feels with a heartier relish the uproarious hubbub of the lower deck—a spectacle like Rome during the Saturnalia? It is so pleasant to be perfectly jolly in a place where you are usually under the restraint of discipline!

However this may be, there is no fear that Jack neglects himself anywhere. In the Sailor's Home, he will be visible devouring turkeys; in the boarding-house he will have in a fiddler. Beyond all question, he will drink wherever he is. I think it also exceedingly probable that he will sing. By the time the old *Cleopatra* (your last vessel is always the old so-and-so) is dismantled and looking very ghastly, preparatory to a course of "ordinary" service, her late inhabitants will be roaring round a hundred fires. Jack's cup by the Channel will be pledged to Sandy's cup by the Solway. And if a little knot of old Rigg's shipmates who happen to be in P—— think proper to serenade their late captain, he will never call for the police, you may depend on it.

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